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SIR EDWARD GREY'S FAILURE

THREE SISTERS

*The Story of the Soong Family
of China*



THREE SISTERS

*THE STORY OF THE SOONG FAMILY
OF CHINA*

by

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Illustrated by

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THE JOHN DAY COMPANY

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Tenth Impression

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THIS does not purport to be an historical biography. It is rather a story, based on actual dated facts but making use, as well, of fictitious detail and incident. The intention has been definitely to remain true to the spirit and feeling of the individuals portrayed, while carrying out the purpose of making real to the reader the important events in the lives of the daughters of China's most outstanding family.

Grateful acknowledgement is here made of material taken from publications of Madame Chiang Kai-shek, as well as of information kindly granted by institutions and individuals acquainted with the Soong family.

OF CHINA—NATIVE LAND OF THE SOONG FAMILY

THE STORY OF "THREE SISTERS" IS A story of China. It tells, not about people who are remote and fantastic, but about human people who are rooted in the very soil of their native land and who have as their highest dream, the service of their country.

To one who sees China entire, she lies vast and circular, bare and brown in the north, luxuriant and green in the south. To the north and west, she is cut off by high plateaus and impassable mountains. To the east and south her shores are washed by great seas. These natural factors, together with her own wish to keep to herself, made her for centuries an isolated and unknown world of advanced culture and civilization.

Three rivers cut China from west to east. The first of these, the Yellow River, creeps through the sandy soil of northern China and often overflows its high-diked banks to bring terror to the people. The second begins its long journey to the China Sea high in the Himalayas and mountains of Tibet, winding its way through deep gorges, past great cities of western China, to broaden out into an open sweep at Hankow where ocean vessels discharge their cargoes, six hundred and fifty miles from the coast.

This is the Yangtze River, which is navigable for fifteen hundred miles and in whose valley lie China's greatest cities, richest lands, and most important industries. The third river flows through the hills of southern China and passes near Canton. It is the West River.

With the barrenness of the north are found the tall, spare figures of the slow-moving northern Chinese. Their fields bear them millet, and a grain called kao-liang, and wheat. A heated brick bed and a bowl of millet gruel or noodles with garlic mean home and comfort to the northern farmer, because furnished with these he may drag out the idle winter days in easy conversation with his friends.

But in the south, the fields are green and velvety with hand-planted rice. The hills are terraced. The mulberry trees are thick with leaves to be carefully picked for the silk worms. The oil trees must be tended for the paint base which they yield. Life moves in a swift round, and the people, small and lithe and quick-spoken, have always to hasten at their work. Their conversation is shouted at each other above the sound of flails or the squeak of a barrow which makes its way to market.

South even of southern China lies the island of Hainan. Its people are like those of the near-by mainland—quick, energetic, hot-headed people who were the first to make contact with the outside world and the first to dream of a changed China.

From this island of Hainan came Charlie Soong, the father of the Three Sisters. In his heart there contended the love for China as she was, and the dream of China as she might be. He loved her old-world culture—her inventions, her art, her literature, her philosophy, her spirit.

But he dreamed of a better day, patterned after the West. This was to be a day of modernization, a day when all the world should honor and respect China, not only for what she had been but for what she was.

Leaving Hainan as a boy, Charlie Soong returned to China many years later in order to make his dream come true.

THREE SISTERS

*The Story of the Soong Family
of China*



“BUT IF I WERE A BOY INSTEAD OF A GIRL, there is a great deal that I could do when I grow up,” the small Chinese girl was saying as she sat at a square table practising her writing with an old-fashioned brush pen. The large characters lay before her, each in its place on the copy sheet. Her fingers were a little smeared with the ebony-colored ink, and she had a tiny splash of it on one side of her nose, which enhanced a certain piquant, knowing look already sparkling in her large, dark eyes.

“It isn’t the learning lessons—I can do that. It’s that nothing can change me into a boy, so I shall never be able to do things like T. V.”

“Don’t be silly,” an older girl said. “If you want to do things, it isn’t a matter of whether you are a girl or a boy—you can do them anyway. Look at Mother! She’s as important as Father, don’t you think? But now, be quiet and listen to what Father is saying.”

"However, it has to be done, by whatever method, the change must come," their father was saying. "It may be a gradual thing, or it may be a revolution costing bloodshed, but I am with you in the belief that change must come to China."

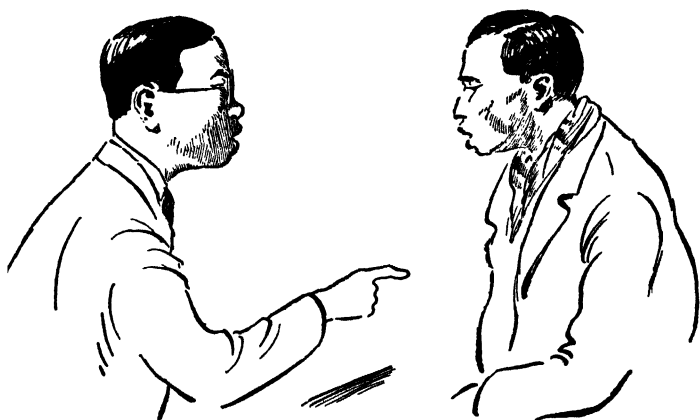
He was addressing another Chinese man of about his own age, but a man who looked less mature and who had a certain light in his eyes, a light that grew suddenly warm and close, then faded even as he listened. As he replied now after a little pause, there was a set sternness in his face, though the eyes were still misty, and the tender lips were tremulous.

"Mr. Soong," he said, "you are like a father to me. You listen to me, but most of all, you believe with me that China must change, and her poor, working classes have a chance, even if it means a complete overthrowing of the present monarchy and a new form of government. In fact, there must come just that—an overthrow of the Manchu monarchists and the setting up of a democracy and a government by the people. We have been oppressed too long by a ruling group, an alien one, at that. Our people have every right to choose whom they would have to govern them and to make their own laws. They have every right to have freedom, to be as America is, to rule themselves. Only that is right. I shall live and die for this cause."

"So shall I," a small, bird-like voice close at hand put in surprisingly. But once the words were said, the slender girl who had spoken them dropped her head and her cheeks grew faintly pink, while her small delicate fingers, which were laying a plait in an even crease down the front of her jacket, trembled suddenly.

"It's all right, Ching-ling," the man said quickly, seeing her confusion. "Of course you shall help. Everyone must help."

"If only I were a boy like T. V.," the youngest girl who sat at her writing said again, looking up. "Ching-ling is older than I, but she is afraid of everything, always blushing, and Ai-ling is oldest of all three, but she wants to manage everyone almost as though she were Mother. I like T. V., my oldest brother, best. He's got sense. Excuse



me, Father. I'm always speaking too quickly. I beg your pardon, Dr. Sun. I am at fault. But I want to do things and boys are always doing something interesting."

"Yes, you did forget yourself, Mei-ling, and you are in too much of a hurry. You are only a child still. You will do things when the time comes. Work hard now so that you will be able to do them when you are older. We are not like some families, you know. Look at your Mother and at all that she does. We count upon our daughters just as much as our sons. Isn't it a strange thing, Dr. Sun! Three sons, three daughters! Well, they shall all have an

American education and if they come back feeling as I did, we shall have six strong workers for a new China."

"Father," said the oldest girl, Ai-ling, suddenly, from where she stood close beside her youngest sister, Mei-ling, who had now given up characters and was making a little design along the edge of an odd sheet of paper, "are you quite sure about our going to America in the summer—quite sure? I have not said anything to any of my classmates, but if it is certain, then I should like to tell them during the last week of school so that we can exchange souvenirs and addresses. Besides, I should like very much to know for myself. I get to thinking of it in the night. . . . Are you sure that I can do well enough in my English? I couldn't bear it to try, and fail. I couldn't bear it! I had rather not go."

"You won't fail," Mei-ling spoke up quickly, lifting her great sparkling eyes. "The sun would stop shining if you ever failed in any lesson!"

"Oh, Mei-ling," said the gentle sister standing beside Dr. Sun, "you always forget and say such exaggerated things! I wish you wouldn't, because they will only get you into trouble. Won't they, Father? If anyone fails, I shall be the one. Sometimes, even when I know the answer, I can't say it aloud and the teacher thinks I know nothing. And when I have to do it always in English, it will be quite terrible."

"Now, Ching-ling, a little while ago you were saying you would live and die for the Chinese revolution, and now you are afraid you cannot do school work in America! How do you put those two things together?" Dr. Sun asked, smiling.

"They are different," the girl said quietly, with her

eyes on the floor. "Ever since you came to our home several years ago, I have known exactly what I wanted to do and what I must do. I must fight with you to give every Chinese, even the poorest, a chance. I have never been able to forget things you said. I lie awake at night, thinking. You told of how your family were peasants, how you went barefoot through the winters, how you ate only baked sweet potatoes which are the cheapest and poorest food, the food of beggars. The feeling for the peasants was deep in your heart. You had to do something about it, and ever since you told of it, I've had to do something about it. I shan't be afraid of anything that happens when I am doing that, but it is these silly little things, like reciting in class, or meeting strangers, or saying the proper thing, that I dislike. People are looking at me when I do them, but when I am working for the peasants, they will be thinking not of me but of the cause. I think that is the reason. I am very foolish, I am sure," she ended, blushing faintly again and bowing a little as she backed toward the door.

But Dr. Sun did not let her go so easily. "Come, Ching-ling," he said, "I understand perfectly what you mean. It is right. It was much the same with me when I was in medical school. In the classroom I was always making mistakes and the sweat would roll down my face. But when I got into the laboratory, or when I did my first operation, suddenly I was afraid of nothing. I knew exactly what had to be done and my hands, which had trembled so much in the classroom that I could scarcely write an answer to a question, were suddenly perfectly calm. I loved the surgery. I felt I was accomplishing something.

"Here was a man with a terrible tumor, and in a few days there was nothing but a clean scar. There was a man with an agonizing pain in the abdomen, due to be dead in a day or two, but when I went in and cut out the abscessed appendix and fixed him up, he was well and smiling at me inside of a week.

"Some of the old fellows from the little town I came from used to stand outside a glass door—those British doctors would never let them in, you may be sure—and they would watch terrified while I worked. One of them



came to me one day and said seriously, after he had seen me do an abdominal operation, 'No man can do such things of himself. You use magic—Black Magic! Cut open a man's stomach, stir up his intestines, sew him up, and expect him to live? It cannot be! That man will die, but if he lives, it will be because you used Black Magic!' Yes, I felt I was really doing something, until some of my cases died of lack of care and nourishment after they went home again. I had been away from home a long time, in school. I had forgotten poverty for a little. People had helped me through school. But I began to see

again. The peasants, the workers, the poverty. Medicine was only a surface remedy. The trouble lay deeper. So I began to think down to the roots, and now I am a worker for a New China!"

"I think I should like to do medicine," said Mei-ling suddenly, forgetting them all. "It would be very nice to cut out a trouble—cut it right out."

"It is nice," said Dr. Sun seriously, "only there are greater troubles than boils or appendices."

"Yes, I know," said Ching-ling breathlessly. "They are very much harder to remove, but more important. I've known all along what you meant, of course. I suppose I shall need all the education I can get. Everything will help."

"Yes, of course," said Dr. Sun looking at the young girl standing there, a puzzled, uncertain look on his face. How much did she understand? Her face was flower-like, tender. Her figure slender, small, graceful. As she stood hesitating in the curtained doorway, one thought of her as a fragile, ancient painting, a lady on an antique porcelain, something far too delicate and sensitive ever to have a part in the drama of Chinese revolution.

II

“I WONDER HOW MANY MORE OF THESE farewell feasts Father and Mother will have to go to,” Mei-ling said impatiently on a very hot evening several weeks later. “Just think of all the feasts they will have to give when they come back from America! It will come to a terrible sum!”

“You can say the worst things, Mei-ling,” said Ai-ling. “Don’t you ever stop to think how things sound?”

“Well, it’s true, isn’t it?” said Mei-ling, trying to fan herself with her handkerchief. “When someone gives you a feast, you do have to give one in return, don’t you? I can’t see what is the matter with saying that here among ourselves.”

“The trouble is that you will almost certainly say it somewhere else sometime, and you may as well learn to accept some things. These things, like giving feasts, are just done, that’s all. One does them.”

“Yes, yes, but it would be nicer not to, wouldn’t it? You are going to change the way you do your hair before we sail, aren’t you, Ai-ling?”

“Are you perfectly sure that most girls in America are wearing those funny pompadours, Mei-ling?”

“Yes, of course. I asked Mary White, and she said that everyone has it loose out in front like that—either like

that or cut in deep bangs like mine and then curled. They sometimes put something inside to hold it up—the pompadour, you know.”

“It sounds rather messy, but of course I can see that one’s hair would just part and look dreadful with nothing to hold it up. I am a little sorry that that is the fashion, for I do think that smooth hair with a little jasmine ornament is elegant, don’t you? How could one wear an ornament with hair puffed out like that? I suppose it is a part of going to America.”

“One would think that you were an old woman, Ai-ling, worrying about ornaments in your hair! I doubt that they wear them at all in America and surely you can find a way of putting a flower in your hair, even if it doesn’t show from the front. What I’m glad about is our feet. Wouldn’t it have been awful if Mother had had them bound! Of course she never would—but if we had had a different mother—only if we had had a different mother we wouldn’t have been we! Oh, I’m so happy about our feet! I never thought very much about it until I happened to think of An-mei Lee. She’s going to America, too, you know, and no matter what shoes she wears her feet still look bound and she clumps when she walks.”

“Of course. The bones and muscles aren’t right and never can be now no matter how loose she wears things. But our father would never have let our feet be bound, no matter whom we had for a mother! Can you imagine Father, with all of his wanting to do away with old customs, letting his daughters’ feet be bound?”

“Our father and mother are Christians, that’s the real reason,” said Mei-ling stoutly. “You know how Mother is, just can’t bear anything that seems wrong. I should



think she would get very tired of always thinking of what's right and what's wrong. Father is a little more fun, don't you think? At least when he and Dr. Sun get together they say some surprising things. Do you think Mother always agrees?"

"Mother is the most wonderful woman in the world," said Ai-ling staunchly. "S-sh, there they come now! Where do you suppose Ching-ling is all this time?"

Mother and Father Soong entered the living room as the two girls ran into it from the bedroom where they had been talking. Mother Soong was rather heavily built, dressed in a closely plaited black silk skirt and brocaded satin jacket. Her black hair showed only a touch or two of silver and was combed back to a knot at the nape of her neck, so smoothly that it shone like satin. A small, delicate hair ornament of seed pearls and jade was thrust in so that it stood outlined against the dark hair. Her brow was high and smooth, the hair-line even where her bangs had been kept plucked since her wedding day. Her eyes were quick in their movement over the girls and room, her nose straight and high, for a Chinese nose, and her lips firm and set above a rather prominent chin. But her hands, which grasped a silk handkerchief and round bead purse, were small and plump and smooth—hands to be admired. On each was a ring, on one a wide Chinese gold wedding ring, on the other a large one carved of solid jade.

"We have just been saying, Mother, how thankful we are about our feet. Poor An-mei! Her feet will never be right," said Mei-ling impulsively.

"You funny child! The things you think of! Do you think I would bind your feet after my own experience?"

"Your experience?" said both girls breathlessly. "Why, Mother, your feet were never—"

"Yes, they were, but only for a little while, for as soon as my parents decided we should go to a Mission school, our feet were unbound at once, and mine had been bound the shortest time of all. Even then I worked and worked with them—massaged them, exercised them, practiced walking. You don't notice anything, do you? It's only when I'm tired, sometimes, that I find myself clumping a little.

"But you must get to bed! Where's Ching-ling? I think the girl is worrying. She is *so* sensitive! If only she would get herself in hand. She has as much sense as anyone. She is just afraid. Are the little boys in bed? I told Li Amah to see that they were in very early. They are so excited that they wear themselves out. This going to America! But your father will have nothing else, and I suppose I am just as bad myself! I shall never be satisfied until I have carried out my determination to give all of you every opportunity to make something of yourselves. All six of you shall have the very best education that we can possibly manage."

The curtain in a doorway at the far end of the living room opened and Ching-ling appeared, her eyes heavy with weariness and an English-Chinese dictionary tucked under her arm. A little startled look came into her face as she noticed her sisters and mother and father standing there looking at her. Her father had laid aside his small, round cap and was taking off a little formal black satin jacket which he had worn for the occasion.

He was muttering under his breath, "I can't abide these flapping gowns any more, even for a feast. They

are more elegant than Western dress, yes, but a plain nuisance. Why, Child, why aren't you with the rest? She looks fagged to death. Not studying to this hour, surely? Come here, Ching-ling."

The girl came to her father and bowed slightly as she stood before him. She saw him as she had seen him a thousand times. He was ambitious, determined, kindly, and good. He was not afraid to do things that were new, which others did not dare to do. He was a man who loved his country above all else, but he wanted a changed China. All these things mingled in her thought of him, for she was not a child for all her slightness, and she had thought far. Ever since she could remember, her father had loved his family not only with the intensity which every Chinese gives his babies, but with something more. He had respected each one in turn, and he delighted as much in the girls as he did in the boys. It was a thing which all Chinese fathers did not do.

A warmth swept over Ching-ling as she stood before her father and all at once she knew why it was that old friends who came to the house wrung his hand in a familiar Western way, and patted him on the back and called him "Charlie." They loved him. He was warm and human and reassuring and people liked to be near him. The enthusiasm with which he rushed at his work, the excitement with which he went into anything new—you could not keep from loving him. He was a little gray at the temples, a little heavy around the waist, but his eyes were very clear and there was fresh, clean color in his face.

"Ching-ling," he now said gravely but, in spite of himself, letting a little smile begin to twinkle at the corners

of his eyes, "why do you take life so hard? We are all together here, all one family, all helping each other, all standing together. You need not work so hard. You have spent the whole evening studying over there in my little office, away from the chatter of the others. But your grades are always splendid. Once you are in America you will be speaking without thinking. Why, I could speak only 'pidgin' when I went! I don't like to see your face so weary and so serious. I like to see you merry and carefree, having a good time. The time for work will come, but it is not here yet. I understand your heart, Ching-ling, and I am grateful for so earnest a daughter, but I want to see you enjoy life, too. You should be interested in other things as well as your work."

"Yes, I know," the girl said, "but something in me, I don't know exactly what, does not let me enjoy things quite like the others. I enjoy most knowing that I have prepared something especially well. It is very foolish of me. I am a little tired—may I wish you and Mother good night?"

"Good night, Child," Father Soong said, dropping into a chair in his quick way and thoughtfully measuring the rather stubby fingers of one hand against those of the other. She is too serious for a young girl, he was thinking. She ought to be dreaming of dresses and poems and such things, not of revolutions and English dictionaries. What makes her different from the others, with the same parents, same home, same schooling? Dr. Sun has influenced her more than the others from the very beginning. Perhaps it was wrong to let her hear him. She was always too aware of everything around her. She was never absorbed in her own little affairs like other children. Perhaps

her life was shaped unconsciously, but how was one to know?

"Oh, well," he said aloud to Mother Soong, "when she gets to America she may learn how to enjoy herself with the others. Come now, it's time for us all to go to bed, isn't it, Mother? And you girls, I suppose, have been chattering foolishness all evening, and the little boys are in bed, and T.V. is, I hope, behaving himself in school. Well, well, good night to all of you."

"You see what I mean about Father," Mei-ling said quietly after they had said good night and were going into their own rooms. "He is always ready to smile."

"Yes, but Mother is a *lady*. She's always the same. I loved the jewels in her hair. And her hands—they are beautiful, like those of the lady on the old Chien Lung vase."

"Yes, yes, but if you were in trouble, wouldn't you rather talk with Father than Mother? I just think he would be more likely to understand. I don't mean that Mother is not wonderful, of course, but—well, good night, Ai-ling!"

III

‘W E’RE GOING ON A GREAT SHIP! WE’RE going on a great ship!” two small boys were shouting as they jumped from one piece of baggage to another. Trunks and suitcases and odd baskets were piled in the narrow front yard of the Soong home in Shanghai, a semi-Western house in the International Settlement.

“Stop it! You will be all dirty before it is time to start,” Li Amah, their nurse, said sharply. She was unusually cross, not because of their jumping, but because she was unhappy at the thought of leaving China. “I can’t go to a strange country!” she had wailed when Mother Soong first told her. “How can I manage where no one understands and there is no decent food, and no one dresses as I do? Everything is different! How can I manage, Mistress?”

But she was going. All of her clothes were there in her pig-skin trunk—all of her clothes and some little tin cans of salted cabbage and fermented beans, some packages of pickled bean curd, and some herbs for medicine. Someone had said she would not be allowed to take them into America, but she would try. They were bought with commission at the Ho meat shop, at any rate, and food was all they would give her the commission in, so she might as well try. Now those boys—!

“Your Western suits! Your Western suits!” she said

severely. "Look at the white blouses—dirty already! Now sit down and wait, or I shall call your mother! Do you hear? I shall call your mother!"

The boys, always called simply T. L. and T. A. just as the oldest in the family was known as T. V., sat down on a great trunk and swinging their heels resoundingly against its sides began talking excitedly to each other.



"It's a very large ship, like the one we saw in the river that time. It is so large that it is like a small town. They have games to play and we shall stop at Japan and at Honolulu."

"No, it's going the other way round! Father said so! You're all wrong. Isn't he wrong, Li Amah? Li Amah, isn't T. L. wrong? She's not paying any attention. She's

crying! Do you suppose she doesn't want to go? I have a piece of candy left. I shall give it to her."

The small boy went timidly toward his old nurse. A wisp of her hair had loosened itself and fallen over one ear. Her neat blue cotton jacket was a little crumpled, and the cloth shoes, which she made herself for her bound feet in the evenings or while she watched the children at their play, were dirty, although quite new. She had been with the Soong family since before the last four children were born, and now that it was being uprooted, she was uprooted with it.

T. A. advanced in his best manner and offered the small piece of paper-wrapped candy. "Li Amah," he said, his loud voice now gentle, "will you eat some candy?"

Her face suddenly lightened a little and she openly wiped her eyes with a large white handkerchief before she accepted the gift and placed it exactly in the center of her mouth where none of the sweetness could come into contact with her teeth, which were prone to ache. "Thank you," she said. "It's very nice. Now that's a good boy to sit still and wait."

Coolies began to pour in through a rear entrance to the yard and were only kept from advancing upon the baggage, like an army, by a man servant and Father Soong, who was in a half-distraught condition in the excitement of getting his family off to America. "Only ten will be needed!" he shouted. "Wait! I'll call the police if you get unmanageable. Lao Nyi! Hold them back there! Such rowdies! Now then."

Mother Soong stood at the front door talking to those who had come to pay a farewell visit. She appeared her usual self, handsome, in simple black. She was bowing

and smiling. The three girls seemed to be flitting around, in and out, remembering small last things and trying to get in a word with their mother.

Mei-ling, most self-possessed of them all, kept circling around her oldest sister and saying only half-audibly, "I love your hair that way. I *love* it! It changes you so much, but Ching-ling is unwilling to do hers a different way and of course I am too young and have bangs anyway. But our dresses are nice, aren't they? Wait until we get to America and put on Western ones. Ching-ling's and mine, of course, aren't very different—just middies and skirts—but yours! Oh, isn't it exciting! Am I bothering you? I didn't mean to. I wish we would start. This time we ride in a carriage, we shall be saying 'Good-by, Shanghai! When we see you again we'll be grown up!' Doesn't that make you feel funny inside? But we'll be grown up and ready to do things, so there's nothing to feel sorry about."

"Well, that is a long time off, for you at any rate!" Ai-ling said matter-of-factly. "I wouldn't get excited about it yet, if I were you, especially since there is enough else to be excited about. Yes, I like the looks of my hair, but I feel very strange. But, Ching-ling, you look sweet with your hair as it is. There is a little wave in the hair around your face which naturally makes it look a little less Chinese.

"Oh, Ching-ling and Mei-ling, let's promise that nothing, nothing will ever change things between us, that always we shall be just as we are, no matter what happens in America, no matter what happens when we come back, whom we marry, where we go, what our work is, we shall always be the same three sisters! Somehow, I feel a little

afraid when I look ahead. So many things could happen. When Father and Dr. Sun talk of revolutions, and changing China, something goes cold in me. I love China as she is!"

"You love her because she treats you well, but if you were a girl with no home, or a sweatshop worker, or a farmer, you wouldn't love her as she is," Ching-ling said with sudden, astonishing vehemence.

"But Mother is already doing a great deal about helping the homeless girls," said Mei-ling with quick loyalty.

"Yes, I know. Mother is doing something, but the trouble is too deep. Why are the girls homeless in the first place? When I get to thinking of what Dr. Sun says, then I forget everything—family and school and everything. I'm not at all afraid for myself, but I am terribly afraid for China. It's very confused."

"Well, I think we are bothering ourselves about a lot that doesn't concern us now, and we'd better forget it and enjoy school and enjoy America and let the rest wait, that's what I think," said Ai-ling with motherly authority.

"Yes," said Mei-ling with finality. "Anyway, I believe we are going at last! There is T. V. with all his bags and things and his Western suit. Aren't you proud of him? Are we going, T. V.? Oh, we are going! Let's not forget to say good-by to Lao Nyi the last thing at the wharf. He'll be so alone and he is such a kind old thing. Li Amah is crying again and yet she wouldn't not go, for anything. Well, here we go! Don't you like my shoes? Patent leather! Oh, I am happy. Father—Father is the only one who isn't all spick and span. Look at his hair! But he can comb it in the carriage. There'll be lots of people at the ship to see us off. I'm sure of it. Mother and Father

... important people in Shanghai. Everyone knows that."

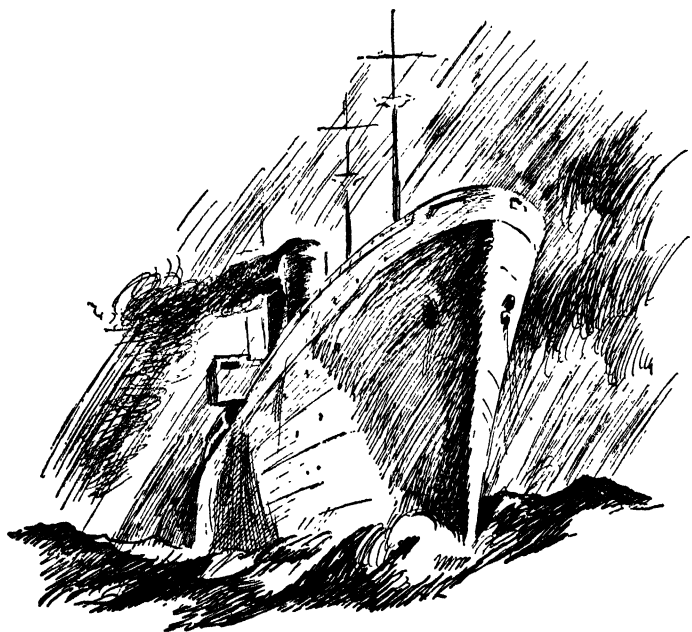
"Be quiet!" Ai-ling said severely. "You never know when to stop."

"Well, it's the truth, but the truth should not always be told, you say. Here we go! Good-by, house! Good-by, garden! Good-by—"



"Don't, please!" said Ching-ling, brokenly, grasping one of Mei-ling's free-swinging small hands. "It's too hard. Let's just go, if we are going."

"I'm sorry, I truly am," said Mei-ling penitently. "It was very silly of me anyway, and I didn't know you were feeling at all sad. Come now, when we get aboard we'll all have a good time. How lucky we are to go! It's all because of our father and mother. We are the most fortunate six children in all the world!"



IV

IT WAS A VERY CALM SUMMER CROSSING FOR the Soong family, until the day before land was sighted. Then a stormy cold wind struck the ship and gusts of rain splashed over the decks.

The children were by now so used to the motion of the ship—all of them, that is, except Ching-ling—that the storm did not disturb them. But Mother Soong, although she said nothing and insisted on sitting through meals, had a pale cast to her face and spent all but meal times lying closely bundled in her deck chair. Li Amah was utterly useless to help with the boys and lay miserably

on her little pallet in the girls' cabin, half sobbing from time to time, "I'll never dare to go home! I'll never dare to go home!"

Mei-ling, overhearing her, crouched beside her and told her that of course she would and not to be silly. Ai-ling brewed her cups of Chinese tea, going into the kitchen herself to be sure the water was bubbling hot.

Father Soong strode the decks with his collar around his ears. There was a boyish light in his eyes and pleasure tingled up and down his spine. "It's the swell of the sea and the air of the sea!" he said to himself. "It is as it used to be when I was a child on the island of Hainan. Going back and forth from the island to the mainland, many times—how many times!—I've felt it just like this. The island, lying so far south off the coast of China, was always green. But when a wind sprang up or a typhoon came, it was like this. And then later, with Captain Jones, it was the same. The feel of a deck beneath my feet!" He paused to look out over the heaving sea, the wind tangling his heavy black hair and the mist settling on his brow.

One looking at him might at first have taken him to be a merchant, except that there was conviction and purpose in every line of him, a beckoning, gleaming ideal. "No, that is not the way," he would say emphatically. "No, no. That gets the wrong result. We shall find a better way."

Now, standing at the rail, his hands were clenching the smooth wooden bar. His hands were not the hands of a Chinese gentleman. They were small, and lightly built and closely knit together, but the fingers were blunt at the ends and the nails were short and little care had

been given them. The skin, too, was a little rough, and one seeing just the hands would have taken them to be those of a working man or a student. He had no time to keep soft hands, nor could he have tolerated them in himself.

Now the hands were white at the knuckles because of the force with which he unconsciously gripped the rail.



His tie was under one ear and his hair all standing on end.

"It will take a very close calculation, but we can do it," he was thinking half aloud. "Without the help of the Bishop, it would be altogether impossible. I shall get them started in—the older ones—borrow if I have to, and then go back to China. Once I get back I can find a way to carry our plans along. I am sure of it, for I have ideas

waiting. T. A. and T. L. are of course only children so they need not bother me yet. Ai-ling goes at once to Macon and among old friends of mine she will get along well. Ching-ling and Mei-ling will be with us in Summit for the present, though I will not send them to public school. It would be too hard, particularly for Ching-ling, while they are just adjusting.

"It would be simpler if we could all be in Macon, but I cannot take them all there. I cannot take my whole family to the Bishop! At any rate, there is James Wen and his family in Summit, urging us to come. It is a nice place, as I remember, and we shall have friends at once. It seems the best solution. It will take great planning and care to get them all through but we can do it—yet I am not sure we could were it not for T. V. Had he not gotten a scholarship, it would have been very hard indeed. But he deserves it and he will prove himself! Ah, T. V.! If the others do as well! For Ching-ling it will be hardest of all. Sometimes I think, if she had never seen Dr. Sun or heard talk of changing China! But how is one to know? And the great change will come. When I get the children all arranged for and doing well in school, we shall go back, their mother and the two little ones and I. Everything waits to be done. I can't stay away from China long, but for the sake of the children this, too, must be done."

The man slowly came to himself, aware that he was standing, facing out to sea, talking into the wind. "Mother will wonder what I am about," he said suddenly with a sheepish look on his face, "yet she knows me pretty well! 'Scheming' she will call it. But she schemes, too, so what is there to that?"

"How one can like the sea!" Mother Soong said very clearly from her blankets as her husband drew near. "I expected to see you fall over, standing there, when the ship all but turned on its side, but I suppose you felt none of it, and if you did, thought only of the pleasant, rocking motion. Bah! It's most unpleasant! But our children must have an education! Do you remember this place to which we are going—this Summit, New Jersey—at all clearly? Or is it only a mist in the mind?"

"I remember it to be like most towns in the northern part of the United States, a neat place with wide streets and white houses, but if you ask me of a certain street or certain corner, then I do not remember. I only visited there once."

"Well, whether you remember more or not, it must be the place to go, for we cannot take Bishop Ainsworth ourselves and six children! That is certain, and James Wen is a man of common sense, and his wife too, so we shall leave it at that. I shall try to do what is suitable in America, but you will remember, will you not, that after all, I am only a Chinese woman who has never before been abroad?"

"Surely it is unnecessary for you to say such a thing," Father Soong said, studying his shoe. "One who has borne me six children, as an old-fashioned Chinese would say, and much more, one who serves society in so large a way, need feel ill at ease in no place. You will soon be acquainted and have many American friends. It will be even better than Shanghai. You will see."

"Yes, yes. Of course, I am prepared for anything. But it is some years since you were in America and much will have changed. Remember that. Do you know what the

small boys are about? Li Amah is so worthless, poor thing."

"Ai-ling had them in the social hall a little while ago. Ching-ling looks very uncomfortable but says nothing. Mei-ling says she has eaten nothing all day. Well, one more day and we shall say good-by to the sea for a time. But I, you will laugh, I am thinking already of going back!"

"So am I!" Mother Soong said with a sudden coming-to-life in her eyes. "This must be done—but think of all that waits in China! I've only begun. The West keeps pouring in, pouring in dance halls and wicked music and strong liquor, disrupting all our own customs and putting nothing in their place. If only it would give us only the good—education and medicine and public health and sanitation and solid Christian teaching! But no, all this other must come, too, it seems, and what is to be the end, if no one works against that which is wrong? I shall never give up. It may be I can accomplish nothing. It may be I shall simply waste my life, but if I can do no more than influence my children toward what is right, then it will be worth all else.

"Those Christian Westerners who helped us in our schooling, and those who taught us, did not intend that the West should bring in all this evil. They were good people, and those who helped you and gave you your chance were good. We should be betraying them, ourselves, and our children if we tolerated anything that was questionable.

"What chance would I have had if it had not been for Christian missionaries? What chance would you have had if it had not been for Captain Jones and your pastor and

General Carr? What chance would Ai-ling have if it were not for Bishop Ainsworth? And how would T. V. have known about the scholarship? I believe God has led us from the beginning, you to Captain Jones, you to me, us all to America. I believe He leads to great opportunities and responsibilities that none of us—not one of us—not even Ching-ling with her timidity—must ever shirk.”

“I have often said I felt something leading me on,” said Father Soong thoughtfully. “It was a thing I could never understand because there were many easier ways for me to take than the one I chose, but I chose it and it still leads on.”

Ching-ling came slowly toward them, bundled in her coat. Her face looked small and white and her hair hung in damp waves about it. Her eyes were very large and luminous and seemed to hold all the light of her face. She had a little trouble keeping her balance, but she came directly to them and sat on the edge of her mother’s chair. It was one of the rare times when what was on her mind so held her that she completely forgot herself. She spoke unconsciously, as though something in her forced itself out, an urge beyond her control.

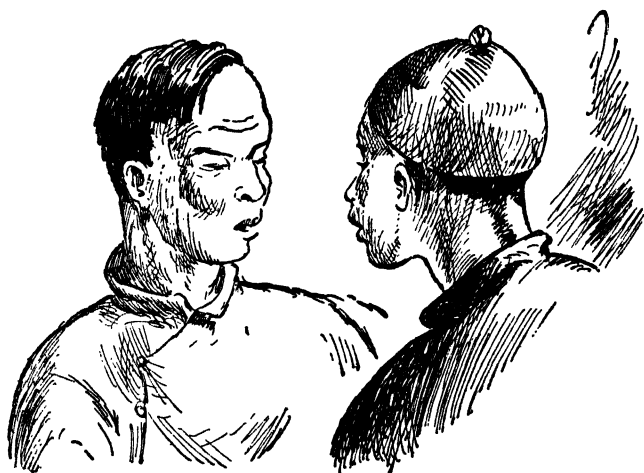
“Some of us have been standing out at the prow. They let us go. I was frightened at first, so long as I held back and would not let myself go forward with the ship. Then, when I put myself into accord with the ship, I was no longer afraid and I felt an excitement, the excitement of being a part of a great on-thrusting motion. I was not myself, I was just a small part of a very great thing, pushing forward into something vast, full of tumult, dangerous, and yet necessary if we are to get to land. I began to think of the sea as our Chinese revolution, but the

guiding, urging motive was the ship, pushing through to reach its purpose. I shall like to think of it so. I suppose I am foolish, but does it seem a good simile to you?"

"I wish you would not worry so, my child. All that comes in time," Mother Soong said, looking closely at Ching-ling whose cheeks were flushed a little now.

"I'm not worrying," Ching-ling said in half surprise. "One thinks of what one is interested in. That is all."

"I know just what you felt," said Father Soong. "I've felt it since I was a small boy in my uncle's tea shop in Boston—not the revolution, I don't mean that, but the being a part of some great thing. I feel it still. I am a part—you are a part—we all are part of the great sweeping change which is coming to China. That is why we are here, all eight of us, coming to learn and prepare ourselves for the work we shall do for China. Now, Ching-ling, you will come with us and have some dinner, won't you? Now that you have given yourself to the leaping of the ship, you won't mind it any more. Come with Mother and me, Ching-ling."



V

SITTING AT DINNER THAT NIGHT WITH his eyes often on Ching-ling, Father Soong's thoughts went back to what he had said to her on deck. Yes, he had felt the same thing of which she had become aware as she stood at the prow of the ship. He had been a part of some great, on-rushing movement almost as long as he could remember. It was hard to say just when it had first come to him. As a young boy he had been eager for more excitement, change, fun. Then—it must be nearly twenty-five years ago—things had changed for him; not all at once but gradually. He had felt himself taken up, drawn in, absorbed in an interest far greater than himself. It had come about during those weeks he had spent in his uncle's silk and tea shop on the narrow street in

Boston. . . . Looking back he could see it all very clearly again, now.

One afternoon, his uncle had said in their own soft Chinese dialect, "Why do you suppose I brought you over to a foreign country? If you wanted to be a scholar, then it would have been better to have gone on studying the Chinese classics in your own province, and be a real one, rather than to be one of these Western students! After all, it cost something for your passage, besides a deal of trouble. You are to be like me—take my place in the shop here, and perhaps later build it into a greater business. Is that not enough for anyone?"

The middle-aged man had been unwrapping rolls of fine silk cloth as he spoke, looking carefully at their tags and feeling of their texture with slender, delicate fingers. He was small of build and lightly made. His cut hair was thinning a little at the temples and his cheekbones were broad and shiny where the fine, yellow skin was taut across them. His keen, dark eyes glanced now appraisingly at the silk and now with a look of rebuke at the young Chinese boy, his nephew, who was sitting on a great earthen jar standing in one corner of the shop.

The shop was fragrant with the odor of the Chinese tea stored away on its shelves, and even the rolls of silk seemed to give out a kind of Oriental odor. Outside, in front, hung a sign saying, "Oriental Tea and Silk, Wholesale and Retail." The street to which it made its announcement was one of the oldest in Boston, a street narrow and winding, much like the one in China whence the shop had been transplanted. And the air which blew through its narrow channel had enough of the tang of salt to remind one constantly of the sea.

The people who passed scarcely noticed the sign, for it had hung there many years and there were other Chinese shops in Boston. Sometimes sailors, more than a little drunk, lurched in, thinking to find a way by which to continue exploits they had begun over in the coast cities of China, but lurched more quickly out again when the small Chinese man standing in his loose-fitting



Western suit, eyes blazing, shouted at them, "You no come this side! Get out! I call p'lice!"

Besides those who came to do their business, there were none who paid much attention to the little tea and silk shop—none except some Chinese students. These came often in the evening after the doors were closed, and filled the little place with their high-pitched laughing and

their chattering of Chinese. Seeing the Chinese man thus, one would not have taken him to be the same one who drove hard bargains with his customers in the daytime. Now he was smiling and at his ease; sprawled out in a low armchair in the back of the shop, his collar unbuttoned and his hair in disorder. Often he brought down little jars of imported seed cakes from his shelves and fed them to the students along with the fragrant tea which they always consumed by the quart. The cracking of watermelon seeds to get the roasted kernels, and the slow chewing of dried lichee nuts were taken for granted any evening that they came. It was so in China and this was a corner of China after work was done.

And now, the last few months, Young Soong had been there, sitting in a corner a little to himself, watching the older ones who came rushing in at night, alive with talk and fun, pouring out their experiences in their own tongue. At first, feeling shy and strange before them, he had dared say nothing. They were Western students and he knew nothing of them. His people knew nothing of the West and he knew little more. His dark eyes had watched these young men, first with questioning, and now with hunger. Slowly he began to comprehend a little of the things of which they talked.

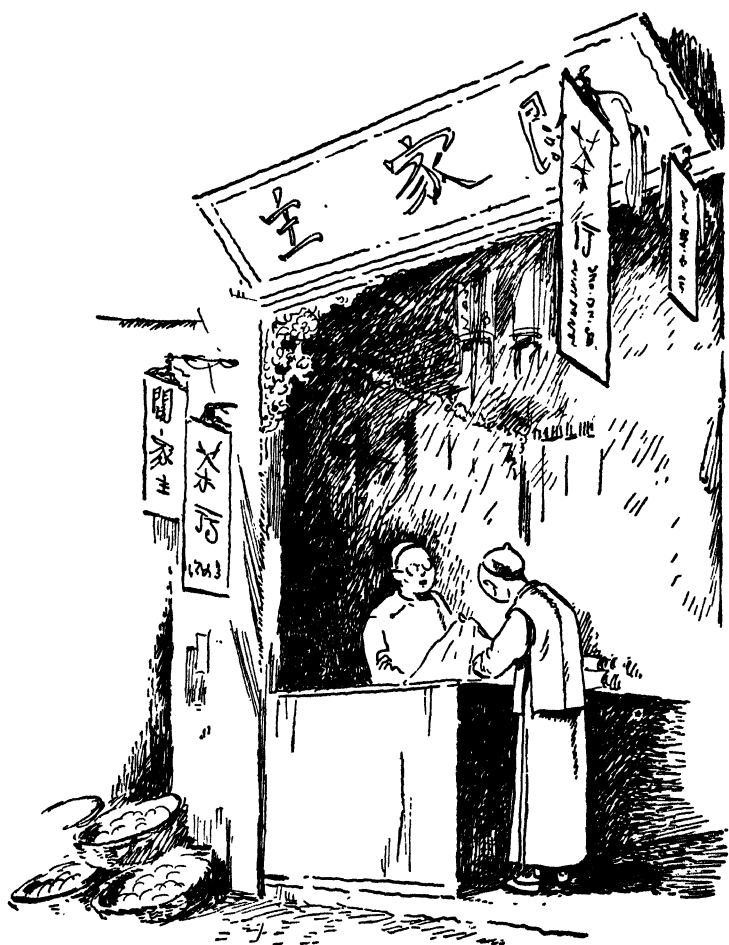
Sometimes, as he sat and watched, a thought came to him. Often it was clearest when he walked among them pouring each cup full of fresh hot water to bring out the strength of the leaves lying at the bottom. "They come to my uncle's to talk among themselves, but they do not talk with him. They are students and he is not, so there are many things they cannot say to him. They are students and he is a business man. It is the same in China."

He pondered the thought slowly in his mind as he worked about the shop in the quiet of the day, and as he went on errands for his uncle, delivering packages and messages, speaking the broken English in which his uncle drilled him. One day, as he stepped into another tea shop and said easily to the Chinese proprietor, in their own language, "My uncle says to tell you that he had word today of the shipment of fifty pounds of the early green tea," he was thinking to himself, "If I go on as I am I shall be like my uncle or this man, not like the students. That is my uncle's plan." He looked about the shop in distaste. Tea and silk—tea and silk in a stuffy shop on a narrow street, and a little silver to jingle in one's pocket or send back to a family in China. He hated it! Surely he had come to America for more than this!

Why had he come? He began to think as he had not thought before. It had seemed just an adventure, an opening when there was none at home. He had not thought beyond that. Now he was in America, the great, rich land of the West! No, he had not thought because it had been enough just to come. But now he would think. He would watch the students. Perhaps later he would talk to his uncle, who was a reasonable man.

"When I get back," one of the students named Li was saying that night, "when I get back, I am going to do something about getting our people taught to read. Here everyone can read. I feel ashamed. I am going to get a law put through—make schooling compulsory, make the farmers study at night, enlarge all that is being done now, by law. In ten years, fifty per cent more of our people in our own land will be reading. You will see!"

"That's not as important as health," said Wang, a



solemn-looking fellow with great, round spectacles. "You know what diseases do every summer. I am going to take a medical course and then I am going back to get a job in the health department and work it up into something big."

"There are too many people now, in China," groaned Ho, a round-faced boy who had put a whole seed cake into his mouth and was trying not to appear uncomfortable because of it. "If you cut out plagues and save all the people, there will be nothing left but to have another war to get rid of some of them. Leave things alone, *I* say. It's Nature's way of taking care of things, anyway." He was quietly reaching for another cake when a fourth student deftly lifted the plate out from beneath his hand and passed it around in the opposite direction. He began to shake one leg unconcernedly and picked a crumb from his coat sleeve.

"You've all got it wrong," said an unusually handsome boy. "Sitting in an office, you can't do anything to help the people. You've got to get out and help them. I'm staying clear of the government and going to start a project of my own—a model village. Want me to tell you about my idea? You see, it's like—"

"No," groaned Ho. "I want some sleep tonight. Write it out and get it mimeographed and pass it out. Here, Kid, more water for the tea!"

The boy fetched the kettle and filled up the cups, spilling a drop of the hot water on Ho's shoe. "Good I didn't have on Chinese cloth shoes, or it would have gone through and scalded me. What are you daydreaming about, Hay-seed? Can't you watch what you are doing?" But Ho was laughing as he scolded.

Then, late in that first summer, Young Soong came to have a purpose. He had not listened to the talk of the students for nothing, nor had the work of his uncle followed its round without notice. His mind was clearly made up. Nothing could divert him. He would not be a shopkeeper. He would be a Western student!

On a summer evening, as they both sat in a tiny yard back of the shop, Young Soong spoke to his uncle. He was trembling a little and twisting a button on his shirt, but he had made up his mind.

"Uncle, you are very kind to me, but I want to go to school. I want to be a student. I am willing to work very hard. Please pardon my speaking."

Old Soong glanced at him keenly and then looked away again. "It is those senseless students with their chatter," he said beneath his breath. "Now, look here," he said more loudly, "I'll tell you the truth. What can you do if you are a student, a graduate from a Western school? Nothing! Don't you know that in China there are many such graduates who have no good jobs and who are neither Chinese nor American? They don't like China any more and they can't be American, so they are miserable. They want to do big things, such big things, but when they get there, only a few can get the big jobs and the rest have to teach school or something—and all of them are dissatisfied. No, the thing to do, if you want to get on, is to learn business. Then you can make money, support those who depend on you, or be at ease in your old age. Believe what I say."

Young Soong's face was downcast, though he said nothing, it not being proper for him to argue with an elder, particularly one who had done so much for him.

"Well, I shall help you in nothing else." his uncle said finally. "I'll do all I can to teach you business, but nothing more."

Things went on as before but Young Soong still held to his determination. The days passed in the same round of work in the store, in running errands, and now in hours of careful figuring in account books and with the clacking beads of the abacus counting board. He tried to do well, thinking, "If I can't learn this, then neither can I learn the lessons of a Western student," and his jaw always set itself as he ended, "for I haven't given up the idea of going to school. Some way, I'll do it yet."



VI

LOOKING BACK, CHARLIE SOONG COULD never decide why he chose that day in early August to run away. Perhaps it was because he knew that schools would open the next month and a kind of desperation had seized him, or perhaps it was because his uncle had said with impatience the night before, "You are not using your heart at your work. Why do you think I brought you here?"

However it was, deep in the night as he lay on his bed, suddenly the decision was made. He would run away. By doing so he would free his uncle of responsibility, and

free himself to do as he pleased. He would get a job and save up money for schooling. It would be his very own. Later he could repay his uncle for what he had done. Now he must find a means of going to school. It was the only way. He had enough English to get along. He was growing tall and looked not so very different from many a dark-skinned American boy. His hair even had the faintest wave. *

He lay thinking the rest of the night. The next day was the one when he always went a long distance away to the tea shop of a man named Meng. He would do his errand and not return. That would give him a longer time for a start. Besides, he wanted to leave things in order. His uncle would know that he had definitely decided to try to get to school. He would accept the fact and wash his hands of the boy. It was best so.

He rose a little earlier than usual and put on all the clothes he owned, one shirt on top of another, one pair of pants over the other. He filled his pockets with little things. Only his extra shoes could not be taken along. It was a hot morning. As he drank his tea and ate his bowl of thin rice gruel with salted turnips and peppers, the sweat rolled from his face. He wiped it away quickly. He had on far too many clothes but he must take them along because he would need them. He even ate more than usual and quietly put into his pocket a small cake left lying on a dish. It would all help. He had no money.

"Try to get back more quickly than last time," his uncle was saying as he started out. "I shall be away this afternoon and there will be no time then for your figuring, so we shall do it as soon as you return."

"Yes," said Young Soong, looking at the floor.

He was gone! It was the last time he would read the sign, "Oriental Tea and Silk," for a long while. It was the last time he would bow to his uncle. A woman sweeping her doorstep waved with an obvious show of friendliness, as she often did, and said in English which she tried to make especially clear, "This is a pleasant day." He paid no attention. Did she think he could not understand ordinary English after all this time! The policeman at the corner smiled his usual smile. "Where you go?" he asked with mild amusement. Young Soong passed on without noticing. He would show them all what was in him!

The two inner shirts were clinging moistly to him by the time he reached Meng's shop, but he wiped his face before he went in to do his errand. Meng held him with conversation.

"Are you going to school this fall?" he asked with interest. "You tell your uncle you ought to be a student. You are bright enough."

"I am going," the boy answered as he bowed his way out. Now if his uncle were like Meng!

But he had it planned out. He would go down by the wharves and wander among the ships at anchor and the men busy at loading. He would see if he could not get a job aboard ship. He was used to the water. With his China home on the island of Hainan, he had been on all kinds of ships and loved the rocking beneath his feet. It was the first thought that had come to him, to go to the shore where the ships lay.

But the sun beating down on the wet sand was unbearably hot. He stood in the shelter of a dory which had been pulled up on the shore for repairs, and took off his

outer clothes, rolling them into a bundle which he held tightly beneath his arm. Now he felt better and it did not matter that he carried a bundle. Many of the men who had to do with ships carried bundles of various kinds.

An old sailor was working at the fastenings of an anchor, not far away. Young Soong went up to him and bowed courteously.



"Have you work?" he inquired. "I want work. Your ship?" He asked further, pointing to a small freighter lying close by.

The man looked up and laughed toothlessly. "Gosh," he said, "think we want a baby aboard, and a heathen at that? No, there's nothin' for ye. A Chineese, I'll bet!"

Young Soong walked away, feeling his face flush red as the old man slapped his thigh and then settled back to work again. Let him laugh!

It was only his first try. He must go to the larger ships. The small ones would not want so slight a fellow. He walked further and further out toward where the

greater ships lay. The waterfront was less busy, yet he felt he had a greater chance here. These were more like the ships to which he had been used. Some of the ships were loading and he watched the men at their work, but there was no use in thinking of that. He could never manage the great weights. There stood a group of men in uniform further down. He would ask them politely. He could do cleaning and polishing and scullery work. He walked up to five men standing in a knot, talking.

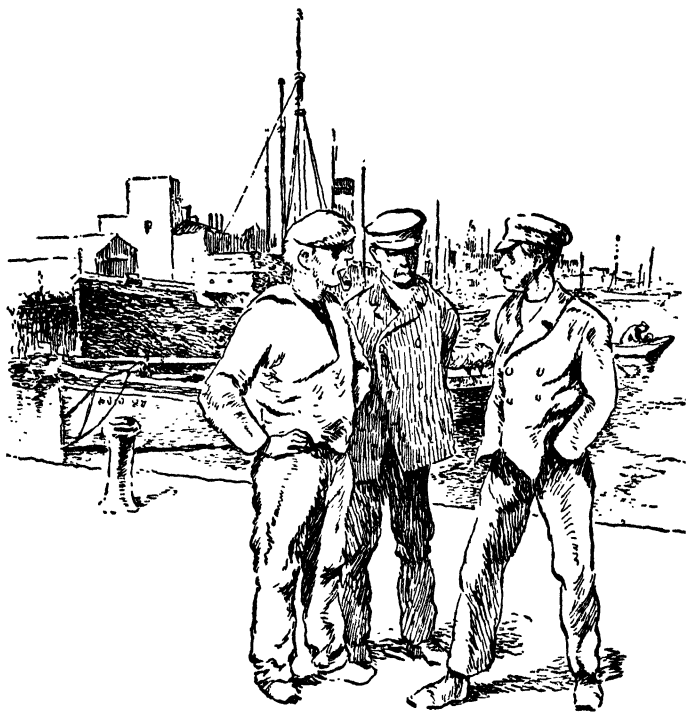
"Please, sir," he began, "I want work. Can take me ship? I can work hard, very hard." He demonstrated with a scrubbing motion of the hand.

One of the men laughed and spat, but the one standing nearest to Young Soong looked at him keenly and then said slowly, "Chinee?" Young Soong nodded and added again, "I can work very hard." The man turned to the others and said thoughtfully, "There's nothing like a Chinee for service. If you want a good servant, take a Chinee. I've seen them East, but I can't take one now. Another time," he said turning toward the boy. "Can't this time. You wait."

"I cannot wait," Young Soong said, a brightness suddenly dying out of his face. He turned away after looking at each one of the men in turn for some hopeful sign.

He walked on down the shore. In spite of the extra breakfast, he was beginning to feel empty. Besides, there was the chance his uncle might have begun to wonder why he was so slow in returning and might even have decided to look for him. He would probably think first of the waterfront just as he himself had, and if he asked Meng when he had left there, Meng would undoubtedly repeat the conversation about school. He had counted

on his uncle's washing his hands of the affair, but Old Soong might not give him up so easily after all. He began to try to keep a little out of sight as he walked, getting on the far side of any object or group of people. He must succeed in finding something. He would do anything—anything at all.



It was afternoon. He could have told by the sun, even if a clock in a great old tower had not struck the hour in long, melancholy tones. Now his uncle would surely know that he was not returning. He must find something. He went up to another group of men and was astonished to see that one of those he had seen in the

group earlier in the day was there. He felt as though he had met a friend. Young Soong heard the man mutter, "I swear if it isn't that bad penny again," and then laugh.

"I want work," the boy began. "Have you work? I can work hard—very hard."

"Naw, I haven't," one man said roughly. "Best move on." Young Soong did not understand the implication. He repeated his request.

"Wait, now," the man of the morning said. "Where do you want to go?"

"Go?" repeated Young Soong shrugging his shoulders indifferently. "Work," he insisted. "Where I go, it does not matter. Just work."

"Don't care where you go, eh?" the man said pondering. "I've seen the fellow before," he said to the others. "Make a dang good little fag if I could manage it. Great notion to try him out. Look here," he said, addressing Young Soong directly, "I'll take you one time. Work well, I'll take you two times, three times. Not work well, I'll not take you any more. Understand?"

"Yes, yes," said Young Soong quickly, his eyes suddenly shining. "I work hard. Ship? Ship?" he asked excitedly pointing first to this one and then to that one lying close by in the harbor.

"No," the man growled. "Down there—*Colfax*. Can you say it? Col-fax. Going to Savannah. One hour—four o'clock," he said, pointing to the tower. "Get your things."

"*Colfax*," Young Soong repeated, "four o'clock," then displayed his bundle of clothes.

"Have anything more?" the man asked, looking hard at him. "Running away, eh? Well, it's no affair of mine.

So long as you work well, I should sweat over it. Here, take this and go aboard if you like." He handed Soong a card. "What's your name?" he asked. "Song, you say. Soong, is it? Well, then, Soong, go on and let the men see the card so they don't put you off. I'll come by and by. Understand?"

Young Soong nodded swiftly, bowed, and almost ran toward the ship. He could not get aboard too quickly. "My ship! My ship!" he was whispering breathlessly as he ran along.

VII

IT WAS IN THE YEAR 1880 THAT YOUNG Soong, now known as simply Soong, and sometimes Song or Sung, shipped as a cabin boy on the *Colfax* plying between Boston and Savannah. He soon learned that it was the captain, Captain Charles Jones himself, who had engaged him that day at Boston harbor. He later realized, too, that in Captain Jones he had a master in whom he was most fortunate, for though the man was sometimes gruff and impatient, he was at heart kind. More than that, Soong soon discovered that the man was interested in him. He could tell by the way the captain paused to watch him at his work, by the way he corrected him in his English, by the way he took pains to teach him little things he need not have known. Sometimes he indicated points on the charts, or helped him learn how to read the barometer, how to follow the ship's course, how to mix a special drink.

One day, Soong sat crouched on his haunches watching some of the sailors knotting hammocks of cord, when the captain passed. "Teach him to do it," he said gruffly to the man nearest him. "He may as well know how. Teach him."

The sailor, a red-haired fellow, laughed and said jovially, "Sure. Knows how now, more'n likely. Got

brains, the kid. See, here. What do I do next? Right! Come on. You do it."

Soong took the cords in his fingers and started slowly, his hands trembling a little. The men were so loud and rough and enormous. They would as soon stretch a fellow out on the deck for nothing, especially now that the captain had wandered on. If he tangled the cords—but his fingers were slender and nimble and in a little while the knotted cords slid slowly beneath them, and with a flushed face, he was working steadily on. After all, it was the same thing over and over until he got to the end of a row. Then he would have to ask. He reached the end and decided to try to start the new row. He turned it wrongly at first and the red-haired sailor shouted, "Hell!" but drew his breath sharply in as Soong saw his mistake and righted it while starting the new row across.

"You've done it before," the sailor said, looking hard at the boy. Soong shook his head and went slowly on. In the back of his mind a plan was slowly taking form.

Months later, during one of the stops at Savannah, Soong bought hammock cord of his own. He had saved up all his wages until now, never buying a penny's worth of anything. He had food and clothes. What more did he need? But he bought a great deal of cord, for his purpose was stronger than ever.

One night he told Captain Jones of his ambition. It was a night he would never forget. He turned down the covers of the captain's bunk for the night, brought in fresh water, and mixed his brandy. Then at the door he paused, as Captain Jones held out his wages to him.

"You're learning," he had said briefly to the boy. "Keep it up. You'll get somewhere."



Soong never understood quite all his master said for he said it in so many different ways, but he always got the general impression. The boy flushed a little and hesitated at the door. Should he speak? Would he spoil things? After all, his work was not so hard and sometimes there were tips. The sailors tormented him, but only in fun. At heart they were kind. He must speak. This work was only the beginning of things for him.

"Captain Charles Jones," he said, using the full name out of a sense of courtesy, "I shall plan to go to school. I shall save my money for this purpose. I tell you the truth because you helped me. Perhaps one year more and I shall go to school. I beg your pardon." His face was burning hot. What if the captain were angry?

"So you aren't satisfied with being a cabin boy under Captain Jones, eh?" the man asked curiously. "Not enough, eh? Got ambitions... Don't know as I blame you. Wanted to go to school myself, once... So I'm just feeding you up for school! Well, well, it's all right with me. Not going to spend anything for a year, eh? Leave it to the Chinese for saving up and living on nothing, not but what you get enough to eat, of course! All right, all right!"

Soong was vanishing through the door, relieved to have unburdened himself, when he heard the captain call.

"Look here," the man was saying with an odd light in his eyes, "don't you ever beg my pardon for being ambitious. You've got my blessing on that, understand? Course you don't! I say I'll help you any way I can."

Soong bowed again and almost ran down the corridor from the cabin. The captain was pleased, even though he would lose a cabin boy! There was no making the

man out. In his excitement, Soong bumped into a tremendous seaman who was on his way below decks. The fellow picked the boy up and threw him over his shoulder and carried him along in pretense of making an end of him.

“Watch where you’re going next time,” he roared, “or you’ll swim to China for all I care!” But he was laughing when he put him down on a stool in the scullery. “Give him some cheese!” he roared again. “He loves it!” Soong laughed and, to the man’s surprise, swallowed a chunk of it when it was thrust upon him. But he held his nose as he did it, for he abominated the stuff.

VIII

BUT SOONG COULD NEVER HAVE KNOWN all that was to happen to him because he had shipped on the *Colfax*, or become a friend of Captain Jones, or picked up the art of making hammocks. He stayed almost his year as cabin boy and during that time Captain Jones had him christened Charles Jones Soong at the Fifth Street Methodist Church in Wilmington, North Carolina, and all the while the boy worked at his own hammocks until he had a great bundle of them. He came to feel certain that some kind of destiny was playing into his life. Why had his decision to go to school been so clear? Why had he chanced on Captain Jones of the *Colfax*, or why had Captain Jones at once felt a kind of personal responsibility for him, even to the matter of his religion and his name?

Working at his hammock-making at night after his other work was done, he pondered it. He counted, too, how many hammocks he must make and at what price he must sell them in order to make more money that way than he could as cabin boy. That was his plan—to make hammocks in his spare time and sell them. He had soon seen that he could never make enough as cabin boy to get a schooling and he suspected that even if his hammock plan worked, he could not make enough. Here he

saw no one but the men on the ship. Ashore, selling hammocks, he would see many people. If he could find someone who would help him! It was the only way. Would his destiny lead him to that someone?

Strangely, he never doubted he would find that friend. Perhaps it was because of Captain Jones. "If Captain Jones had the money, he would help me," the boy sometimes thought to himself, "but he has an old mother." Or again, he would pause in his work and say aloud, "There must be another like him, for I am willing to work and I can learn. Anyone may see that."

When he talked to Captain Jones of his plans, Captain Jones always said, "You try it first in the South. They won't turn you down as cold. Try Georgia. You can start out right from Savannah—get out into the country."

Georgia, that was it! There was something about the people there. When he wandered through the streets, they were soft-spoken and polite, more like his own people than those in the North. Georgia was the place.

And so, the beginning of the second summer, he was peddling hammocks and looking for the man who was to help him get to school. It wasn't easy! "Land sakes," a huge old negress told him, "think I got time to hang myself in a hammock? I'se busy washin' fer white folks so's I kin fill my pickaninnies. I ain't got no love fo' a Chineese, anyways. Go long there, 'fore I sics the dog at yuh!"

Soong bowed himself away. At first he made the mistake of asking at every house. Later he found he got along better if he passed the poorer ones and stopped

only where there was a shady lawn and a pleasant sense of ease. Those were the places where people had time to think of hammocks. He should have known that. But even then things were uncertain.



"Hammocks?" a woman repeated after him. "No, I'm sorry, I wouldn't care for one. I've been fooled so often, buying from foreigners, that even though I could use one on my back lawn, I wouldn't risk it." Soong smiled in his most charming way and bowed as he turned away. At his smile, a look of uncertainty passed over the

woman's face, yet Soong could not bring himself to make another attempt.

But on a very hot afternoon Soong came to a great estate stretching over acres of rolling country. He could see the house, large and white, on the crest of a rise, and smell the fragrance of wild honeysuckle, covering a stone wall at his feet. Off in a pasture were fine cows and nearer the house was an orchard heavy with fruit. A winding driveway led toward the house. This was the kind of place where two or three hammocks might easily hang under the trees on a lazy afternoon.

He rearranged his bundle, putting on top a few special hammocks with a design of colored cord. He took out a pocket comb and combed back his thick, dark hair and then wiped his face clean of dust and sweat. This was the kind of place for which he had hoped.

He went down the driveway at a brisk walk. Now he could see dim figures beneath some of the trees near the house, some on the grass and some on low garden seats. "Maybe this time I shall find my Captain Jones," he said, "maybe this time, one to help me."

He was very near the house now. He could see that it was old and rambling, but in good repair. A fine saddle horse stood tethered near a side entrance and a Negro boy in livery was waiting, idling on the steps. "Maybe this time," he whispered to himself again, moistening his lips.

He was there. Three ladies were in the group, one rather old, two young and pretty. A boy was there, too, but he did not seem like the others. A man, the father, Soong guessed at once, was coming down the front steps.

Soong went toward him, thinking it best not to intrude on the group.

"I beg your pardon," he said, "but I have stopped to see whether you would look at some hammocks which I made. I thought that beneath your trees, they might be useful to you. I sell them because I want to go to school and I must earn money. I am from China but I want the learning of the West. I am a Christian and my name is Charles Jones Soong."

The grave, elderly man looked at him sharply from beneath great, bushy brows. Soong, trembling a little, felt himself transparent, like a spirit through which one could see. Surely this man was severe and would be harsh with him. He had been mistaken in hoping for anything here.

After what seemed a full half day of time, the man said in a surprisingly quiet, low voice, "Show me the hammocks and we will talk. Betty!" he called, "ask Mammy to bring some mint tea—cold as she can get it! It's a very hot day," he added, motioning Soong to a low wooden seat. "Now for the hammocks. But why hammocks?"

Soong felt it was a question which he must answer.

"I was aboard ship—the *Colfax*," he began, and then went on to tell of his ambition, his running away, the kindness of Captain Jones but his inability to help. The older man sat very gravely by, with a hammock spread over his knees. The ladies were off to one side engaged in conversation of their own, looking at him curiously now and again, although with modesty and courtesy. The tea had come. Soong could scarcely finish his, not caring for such sweetness.

After what seemed another interminable time, the man said quietly, "You may leave two hammocks."



The interview was over. There was nothing left but to go. It must be the end. Yet Soong could not keep from saying before he bowed for the last time, "I have only one purpose—to go to college. I should work very hard, very hard indeed. I beg your pardon. Thank you for your kindness."

Soong slept restlessly in the cheapest lodging that he could find, for a heavy rain had set in after the sultry day. Often he slept out in the open field, saving every penny that he could, but this night he had to find shelter.

It was already August, the first week of August. Next month schools would open. He had little more than when he left his uncle—a few dollars, more English, a little trade by which he could live independently, and that feeling to which he still clung, that something was leading him on. The very fact of Captain Jones would not let him give that up.

The next day he must be on his way again, peddling hammocks and half wishing that he had never left the ship. This was hard, hopeless work. Yet when he was about to leave the village where he had slept, he could not keep from asking when he stopped for a little breakfast, "Will you please tell me the name of the man with the great house, east of here, a great house with fruit trees and cattle?"

The woman who set his food before him appeared to question the propriety of telling him, and then, looking sharply at him, said without comment, "General Julian Carr."

General Julian Carr! The name ran through his mind. He had seemed a kindly man, but nothing had come of it except the sale of two hammocks.

The weeks passed, and Soong became more brown and rugged with his tramping through the summer air. He had been through many of the by-ways of Georgia, and tracing them on a little pocket map, he began to feel a certain familiarity with the state. But he was very little nearer going to school than before. He might be able to pay tuition for one term—no more. As the summer drew on toward its close, people were less interested in hammocks. What would he do when fall came? That was the question which tormented him now.

He started working back toward Savannah again, with nothing very definite in mind. At least it would be good to see the *Colfax* and perhaps talk to Captain Jones.

On the first day of September he came to the little village where he had asked the name of General Carr, and late in the evening he wandered out to look at the great old estate once more. He had left his hammocks behind this time. This was not a business occasion. He only wished to see the place again, for it had stayed in his mind.

It lay as before, beautiful and well kept and very inviting. He longed to pass down the driveway again and talk again with the kind elderly man, but a fear of intruding held him back. He had no business there, and there was nothing he could do.

He sat down on the low stone wall thinking deeply. Which way should he turn in the matter of getting to school? Was there anything that he might try? Should he have left his uncle? And yet he was glad not to be in the silk and tea shop in Boston. He had written a letter to his uncle from the *Colfax*, thanking him, telling what he was doing, and assuring him that some day he would repay. There had been only a short, curt note in reply. His uncle washed his hands of him. But he would rather be here, free, than there, tied by a kind of obligation. There must be some way to go on, for part of the way had already opened for him.

Someone was moving slowly about among the low shrubs not far from the wall, among the leaves and grasses. Soong caught his breath. It might be best for him to go, for he might be mistaken for a trespasser, an experience no longer new to him.

He rose from the wall and stood a minute brushing the dust from his clothes. He had a very lonely, sinking feeling in his heart. This was his last visit to the place, but it was a place he would never forget.

"Who's there?" a gruff voice called, and suddenly through the brushes appeared the head and shoulders of General Carr himself. He had on a misshapen hat and there was a three-cornered tear in his faded coat sleeve. "Why do you stand there? If you have business here, then come in decently and make yourself known." He was peering through the bushes in the failing light.

"General Carr!" Soong said quickly. "I beg your pardon. I have no business. I stopped to rest on your wall and to look at your very beautiful garden. I am the Chinese boy of whom you bought two hammocks. You will remember?"

"Oh, yes, yes," the man said uncertainly, shading his eyes with one hand and looking hard at him. "Yes, I recall. You are the boy who is going to school," he said suddenly as though the conversation had just come back to him.

"No," said Soong, "I cannot go. No one wants hammocks now, and I have not enough. I shall find other work."

"Oh," the General said, working his way toward the wall. "That's it, is it? You've been peddling all summer, have you? Think I'll rest a bit, too. Too dark to pick out any more of the rhododendron. Something has happened to at least a dozen of the ones I had put in here. Can't make out what. Not a vestige left. Yes, yes. Well, it's hard to work one's way through school without something to start out on. Yes, let's see. I have something to

suggest now. As a matter of fact, I had a letter just after you had left."

"Oh," said Charlie faintly, "you had a letter about me? There is no one except perhaps—"

"The pastor of your church in Wilmington, and an enclosure from Captain Jones," the General said gruffly.



"Oh," said Charlie, utterly at a loss to know where he stood.

They sat on until it was utterly dark and then there was a faint halloo from the house, answered by a shrill whistle from the general. "Dinner," he said briefly, "and Anna is the devil about waiting, but there's always plenty for one more. Come along and lend me a hand.

My eyes are useless in the dark. Now, this matter of school—”

Soong sat at the table with them all, the general, his wife, his two daughters, but no son, for the boy he had seen there before was a visitor, he was told. He felt their kindness to him and their courtesy as they urged him to eat and asked him questions about his country. They were kind, good people. His pastor had written about him!

But when the meal was over, General Carr dismissed him gently with the words, “Come tomorrow. This is my card. I must think of everything. I did not know where you were. No one knew. Now we must come to a decision.”

Once back to the lights of the village, Soong looked carefully at the card. “General Julian S. Carr. I am to go tomorrow,” he said to himself. “Perhaps, then, the way leads on.”

He could not sleep that night for the hope and excitement in his heart.

IX

“**A**ND SO IF YOU WANT TO STUDY—IF YOU are determined to study—I will help you,” General Carr said the next afternoon to the dazed boy who stood before him. They had been talking for some time on the great old porch. General Carr had asked searching questions about what Soong wanted to do, and always the answer had been clear-cut and certain. “I cannot tell what courses of studies until I know more of them, but I shall take those which I can best use in my own country.”

“I think it is wise not to decide too soon. Take your general courses first as much as possible. I have thought of Duke University as a good place for you. It is not very large and you will get more attention and more help. About the rest, we can see later. You are to write me exact details of your work and your expenses, but your spending money, and your board, you must be responsible for. If later when the work becomes easier for you, you can undertake more earning for yourself, I shall trust you to do so. I am your sponsor, and if anything goes wrong and you cannot straighten it out, write me, but I won’t be bothered with petty things, or personal quarrels. Attend to them yourself.”

The day, a short while after, when Soong—Charlie

Soong, he called himself now—registered as a student of Duke University, was in many ways the most exciting in his life. He felt young and alien and odd among these others so much at home, so at ease among themselves. He would have almost given up the idea of school forever, had it not been for the constant reassurance of the thought of Captain Jones, his pastor, and General Carr. These had believed in him and he could not fail.

“There is some meaning in it! There is some meaning in it,” he kept saying to himself. “Some purpose leads me on. Perhaps there is a work for me. It is as though some power outside me opened the way.”

The first weeks he was a stranger in his classes, but little by little the other students reached out to him, sharing books, helping him get an assignment clear, finding that the response in his bright dark eyes was ready, even though at times his tongue faltered because he failed to find the words. Long before the first term came to its end he was “Charlie” to everyone. His professors felt the keenness of his mind and the hunger to learn from these Western books. They began to count on him in certain ways, for his good spirit never failed. “Charlie will do it,” came to be a familiar expression when something extra needed to be done.

After the first term, the direction he must take in his studies began to grow clear. Writing to General Carr, he said, “My one purpose is to serve China. It seems to me she needs first the background for integrity and honesty, and next a road leading out into the knowledge of the outside world. For this reason I think I should go back prepared to teach my people Christianity to bring about the first two, and English to accomplish the last. I write

to you for your advice. I am happy to say that I have been able to undertake some work in the college offices so that for this term I shall not need quite so large an amount. The students are very kind and I am very happy. Indeed it is as though a Great Power had been leading me, Charlie Soong, ever since the days I sat listening to the students in my uncle's shop. I do not want to fail in any way. All this shall count for my people."

Studying these letters, General Carr pondered what more he might be able to do to give this Chinese boy the best possible advantages. If he wanted to take a theological course, another college might be better. He must think it over. His heart warmed at the remembrance of the light in Charlie's face when it had all been decided. "Crazy to go to school—just crazy to go. I wish every American had his determination."

The outcome of the pondering and Charlie's definite decision to take a theological training resulted in his leaving Duke University and going to Vanderbilt. It was a little hard to do. He had made friends and when General Carr's purpose and the good reasons for it, became clear, Charlie let it be known.

"I don't like to leave," he said earnestly to his English professor. "You have been so very kind! But I must do everything—anything which will prepare me best for my work in China. I shall not soon forget your special help with the tenses, nor the *th*-s which for so long a time I called *d*-s. Nor shall I forget 'Thanatopsis,' that poem by Bryant. He writes of his country—this country which helps me—while I think of mine. Since studying that poem I have thought of China with the same feeling which that man had."

Even the little blue-eyed office stenographer hung about Charlie during his last days at Duke and said in her drawling voice, "Aw, don't go, Charlie. We all want you to stay. You're so different and so nice. Don't you think you could get just about as good courses here?"

He looked at her wonderingly. These American girls were so strange, one never knew what they meant. "Just



about as good will not do," he said firmly. "General Carr understands that I must get the most suitable that there are. . . . But thank you."

And then after that summer's vacation during which he worked hard, going through papers for a friend of General Carr, allowing himself no time for pleasure except as his employer insisted upon it, he was in Vanderbilt University.

This time it was easier to adjust himself. There were one or two other Chinese students. He felt less conspicuous. They worked together with an intensity of purpose which the American students did not seem to show. When a question had been the rounds, it was invariably answered correctly by one of these Chinese, standing with a blank, unrevealing face before the others. But of all the Chinese students, Charlie was soon the favorite because of his exuberance and his open determination and that something going out to all around. "Charlie Soong's *on*. He's got what it takes," the students said. And so he was lured into functions and made one of a little group, while sometimes the other Chinese students were included, and again they were not.

Charlie loved it all. "I like it very, very much," he wrote to General Carr. "The Americans are very good friends and they like to have a good time. They are very kind to me. Sometimes I think they are too kind."

What Charlie liked best, however, was the time he shared with a certain professor, a young man who at once caught Charlie's spirit and his determination to serve China. When they could, they spent hours together.

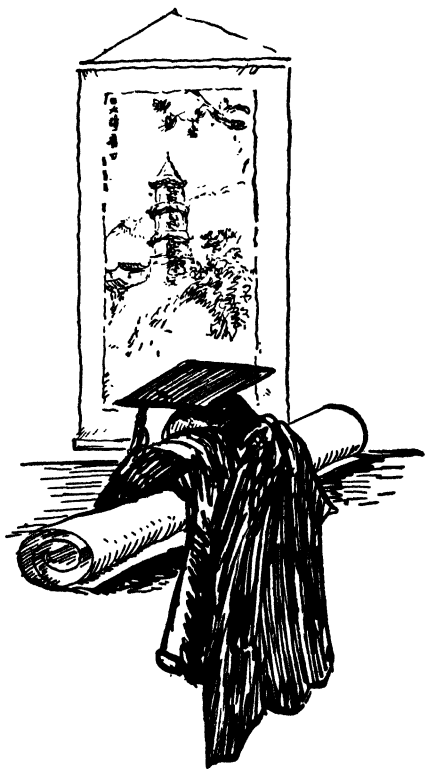
"So much has to be done," Charlie would say vehemently. "We have no good hospitals, no sanitation, no public health, no compulsory education. We have graft and dishonesty. No officials need to give account of public money. If they were asked to do so, they would feel insulted. I wish I had ten—one hundred—lives to live. I should give them all to China. But first, they must learn honesty and kindness toward each other—integrity."

The young professor studied Charlie and came to love him. "He is tackling the job of a whole race," he thought.

"He can really hope to accomplish very little, but how to make that little tremendous in point of its influence, is the problem. I wish I could help him more."

And then it was all over—college in America—being a Western student. Charlie Soong stood in his cap and gown with his diploma in his hands. General Carr and his pastor from Wilmington stood with him. Charlie tried twice before he could speak.

"Were it not for you two, and Captain Jones, I should be still a small merchant in a Boston shop, able to do nothing for my people. I cannot repay you except by what



I can do in my life in China. Hundreds, perhaps thousands of people will be changed because of your help given to a Chinese boy. I cannot thank you."

There they stood, silent, in the afternoon sunshine of the college campus, all unwilling to trust their voices—old General Carr of Bull Durham Tobacco fame, the Methodist pastor from Wilmington, and the young Chinese man. The first was thinking of the Chinese boy who had wandered into his estate on a hot summer day. The second was remembering Captain Jones who had brought to him the young cabin boy who strangely had caught the meaning of Christian teaching. But Charlie Soong was thinking, with a great up-surfing of the heart, of China. He could scarcely wait. He could scarcely hold himself here with these other two, even while he longed to show them respect. He wanted to tear off his cap and gown, pack, be gone—gone back to China! He was ready, and his work lay ahead!

X

AS THE WATER THROUGH WHICH THE SHIP cut its way, changed from deep blue to a muddy yellow, Charlie Soong began to feel himself at home. The waters were yellow from clay carried down the rivers and lapped from the brown shores of China. He had many times drunk tea made of river water and knew the strange, flat flavor of that clay!

Soon he would see the low-lying shore. Soon there would be great junks, then smaller fishing boats, then the village of Woosung, not far from Shanghai. He was landing at Shanghai because that was where he was to teach, but his home lay far to the south. At Chinese New Year time, the greatest holiday time of the year, he would be going home, to the island of Hainan. There was no place like one's old home, and the love of it was deep in the heart of every Chinese person. One went there for feast days and family weddings, and one was buried there, if one could afford it, no matter how far the great wooden coffin, lacquered and sealed, had to be transported. All the family should eventually be gathered in one place, the old family home.

Charlie was thinking of how strange it was that China, made up of so many different peoples and isolated parts, was yet one in culture and feeling. "China is still China,"

he was saying with a deep, warm feeling rushing over him. "No matter what happens, whether she remains closed to the world or open to the outside, there is the same spirit."

And so Charlie, coming to Shanghai with his diplomas in his hands, could not but feel the spirit of China. Setting his eyes again on the crowds of yellow people who swarmed over the ship and all but spilled from the wharves as the ship drew into harbor, on the finely-lined face of an aged Chinese gentleman, on the placid face of a buxom mother, even on the blank face of a blind beggar, he felt the spirit of China and tried to put it into words for himself. There was not the restlessness or dissatisfaction of the West. There was not the prosperity or sophistication of the West. There was instead an acceptance, a quietness, an appreciation of small things, a realization that life consisted of living rather than of achieving. That was it. As a child he had often visited an old fisherman who had his nets on a quiet inlet not far from the Soong home. Many and many a time the old man had brought up nothing for a day at a time, and the small boy standing by had asked, child-fashion, "But why do you still go on fishing? The fish do not come."

"Not this time, nor the next, nor next, but some time," the man had answered. "No one can catch fish at every bringing up of the net. Never has it been so. My grandfather and my father caught fish here, and I too, for many years. In their good time, the fish come."

His people knew how to enjoy even the poorest, simplest living. That was it. They did not strain toward the impossible or live on hopes. They lived on realities—the fragrance of hot, coarse rice, the flavor of crisp,



green vegetables, the song of a thrush in a cage, the beauty of an old scroll. These small things brought as much pleasure as a feast or a palace, and a vast amount more of contentment. Why struggle, therefore, for anything?

Charlie Soong felt it rising up and engulfing him, the spirit of China, but he shook it off. He had come back to *do* things, a returned student from the West. His schooling was Western, his religion Western, his intention Western. He wanted his country to have all that America had.

Taking his new suitcase firmly in hand and pushing back the coolies who fought for it, he disembarked and made for the customs officers. No, China must change. The old ways were all right in their time, but the time was past. He had come to help change China, and his determination was burning and hot within him. China must change.

XI

HE FOUND HIS FIRST JOB IN SHANGHAI, teaching in a Methodist boys' high school, and it was at a social gathering of school teachers early in that next winter that Charlie stood, as was habitual with him, hands in his pockets, hair pushed back, talking to a small group of listeners. This was one of the few events which men and women attended together—men in flowing Chinese gowns and men in Western suits of questionable fit and uncertain creases, and women in short flowered satin jackets and finely plaited black silk skirts. There were more men than women, and yet the men were a little embarrassed by the unaccustomed presence of the women. The latter were clustered at one end of the long room, talking together, but obviously a little ill at ease. Some of them were so overcome by a schoolgirl shyness that they said nothing, or only "yes" or "no," their cheeks growing pink when they spoke. Others tried to seem careless, tossing their heads with bright, ready smiles. Only one in all the group was calmly and pleasantly herself.

This one stood beside others who were seated and she was watching everything. She was of medium build, dressed in a peach-colored jacket edged with black which brought out the faint pink and ivory of her face and enhanced the darkness of her eyes. A single small, filigree

ornament was thrust into her hair next to the smooth, oval knot just above her high jacket collar. Her hands, clasping a foreign leather purse, were very small and plump, and beautifully shaped, but she wore no rings.

"We always behave like this," she said now with a little impatience in her clear, strong voice. "In every mixed gathering it is the same. We do not know what to do so we sit around and watch the cocks strut. Come now, if no one else suggests a game, I shall. This is too silly! I'll ask one of the old men teachers to help, so no one will say we are too bold. If I can get Mr. Liu's eye, he will see what I mean. Mr. Liu! Any other time he would look too soon! Mr. Liu! Oh, why can't *he* look directly this way instead of that young one who is so new he knows nothing? Now *he* has to come running this way, forgetting he is not in America! Now what have I done!"

"I beg your pardon. Can I be of service?" Charlie Soong was saying, looking into the young woman's determined face. Elderly Mr. Liu was scurrying along, too, and hastened to do the introducing. "This is Miss Ni, Miss Wu, Miss Zia—Mr. Soong."

"I was just thinking," Miss Ni said to Mr. Liu, "we ought to do something—play a game instead of sitting around. It would be more interesting and we'd get better acquainted. Do you have one to suggest? We could start a pun game and we could act out simple words until we guessed the pun, and have forfeits for those who could not guess. But perhaps you have a much better idea."

"Why, that sounds fine," Charlie broke in without stopping to think. "Let's do it!"

Miss Ni's black eyes flashed at him momentarily and then moved on to Mr. Liu.

"I can think of nothing better to start with," the older man said, a little uncertain. It was very unusual for men and women to play together. "Shall I ask them to form a circle?"



In a little while they were all breaking up and Miss Ni was deliberately trying to mix the men and women. "It will be as silly as ever, if I don't," she said to herself.

Then the game began. Charlie found himself rusty on the fine points of this very Chinese pastime. One had to go back into the old literary style to get words of less

common usage and when it came to acting words from old philosophies, he was hard put to it. In a little while he found himself competing with Miss Ni, whose eyes were bright with excitement. The competition was a stimulant, urging her on to more and more clever ideas.

"Who is she?" he whispered quickly to a man beside him.

"One of the three Ni sisters—Methodists—teaches in the East Gate Girls' School—awfully smart—active in many ways. Now listen to her! Ha, ha, ha!"

The girl had hit on a word that Confucius had once used but she was punning it in half a dozen everyday ways, all in a simple doggerel rhythm. Everyone laughed and Charlie laughed, too, but as much in amazement as in humor.

That was the climax of the game. They called upon this one and that one for forfeits and then on one of the oldest present for stories of ancient history which he told well.

But Charlie could not keep his mind on stories. He glanced once or twice at Miss Ni. She was sitting almost out of sight behind someone else. He wished it were as simple to talk to a girl here as it was in America. But he would find a way. He would manage somehow or other to talk to her when the party broke up.

They were beginning to bring in tea and little cakes and fruit. The end was near, then. This was the time to watch his chance. She was one of those helping to serve. She was coming in his direction now, but he must not seem forward. He could not tell how modern she really was.

"Miss Ni's knowledge and use of the old Chinese is very unusual. I find myself very out of practice," he said

with his eyes on the plate she passed. He had better begin by being formal and old-fashioned in the way he spoke to her, and not say "you" as if he knew her well. He might get acquainted sooner in the end.

"That is because Mr. Soong has been busy studying other things in the West," she said, ignoring the first part of what he had said. Now, when she was close, Charlie could not but see that Miss Ni had the skin of magnolia blossoms, that her hair was as fine as silk, that two tiny dimples at the corners of her mouth twinkled bewitchingly when she smiled. He drew in his breath to say something more, but she had moved on down the line, talking to everyone and smiling exactly as she had done to him. His impulse was to get up from his place and offer to pass the plate for her, but common sense held him back. "I must move carefully, very, very carefully," he told himself.

Suddenly it was as though everything depended upon how he might impress Miss Ni. He was trembling a little while he drank his tea. He felt cold when he thought of the fact that for all he knew she was engaged or, as the Chinese said, that her "name characters had been matched." He could not eat his cake. He must find out about all this at once. Probably everyone else knew. But this evening he would try to manage another word with her if he could.

The opportunity to speak further did not come, but as the party broke up and began to pass into the entry, Charlie found himself almost directly behind Miss Ni. Her words came clearly to him. "It's time we learned some new ways," she was saying. "After all, when we work together, we should play together, too." Her low,

bright laugh rang out, and Soong caught a side glimpse of her face.

When he had left the others and got out into the street, he kept on walking. The thought of his room was intolerable. All of his life, which just that morning had lain in such an orderly fashion before him, was now scattered and in disarray. At the deepest bottom of his mind lay the question, "Is this feeling which I have, a part also of the destiny which has led me on? Or is it the foolishness of a young and thoughtless man?"

This was the question which tormented him all through the night while he tried to push it away and fall asleep. He could not answer it if he would because he did not have the facts. He did not know anything of Miss Ni. He had seen her only once, but, over and over he told himself, "Everything she said and did made me feel that she, too, wants Old China to change. Is not that a sign that we suit each other, if we dream the same thing?"

So he reassured himself, but when at last he slept it was with the image of her strong, vivid face with its dimpled smile before him, and it seemed no longer to matter whether she wanted to change China or not.

XII

THE QUESTION AS TO WHETHER OR NOT Miss Ni was part of that toward which his destiny led him, the question which so tormented Charlie Soong the first moment that he became aware of her, was soon answered. By a simple moving on of events it became perfectly clear to him that they were intended for each other. Miss Ni was not engaged. Miss Ni was a Christian. Miss Ni was talented and able and pretty, besides. Miss Ni was busy in many ways doing good. What more could he possibly ask?

With the same simplicity with which he had run away from his uncle to pursue his education, he now set out to win Miss Ni. But this was not a case where he could get a middle man and make arrangements through him with the help of the soothsayers, as the old custom was. In this changing of the times, Miss Ni herself must say whether or not she wanted to marry him.

"It is better so," Charlie thought. "After being in America, I should feel a little foolish if it were done in the old Chinese way." But thinking back to the one evening he had seen her, he could not be at all sure how matters would come out. There was a firmness in her jaw and a determination in the carriage of her head. Ah, but she was a wonderful girl!

Hesitating between the still old-fashioned way and the too rude new one, Charlie agonized over what to do. At last, in a perspiration of anxiety, after a decent length of time had passed, he wrote a letter to her speaking openly of what he wanted and asking if he and Mr. Liu might call. He sent the letter by special messenger rather than through the mails and told the fellow over and over again the address to which he must take it.

"It is important!" Charlie said, sick with concern. "It is very important—a matter of life and death—lives and deaths. The fate of China may depend upon it! Now go and return to tell me she has it. I shall pay you for the two trips—mind. Now go!"

Charlie went to a tea shop and drank cup after cup of tea, scarcely knowing what he did. He was harassed by the idea that he might have spoken too soon, that he had gone about it in the wrong way, that he had ruined everything. And yet this was where his destiny led him. Whatever he had done, it could not be altogether wrong. The sun was sinking. How long would the fellow take?

And then, he came in.

It was *there*—in his hand—Miss Ni's reply. Charlie Soong looked at it quickly, not daring to let the individual characters catch his eye for fear their meaning should come to him. The characters were beautiful, each perfect and each symmetrically set on the page. The heading was formal yet not elaborate. His eye began to follow the lines down without any conscious purpose on his part. She was appreciative of the honor shown her. She had thought to go on with her teaching for some time since so much for society waited to be done. She had spent many years in preparation at expense to others.

It was very hard for her to speak finally, knowing so little of him. But she would be willing to receive Mr. Soong and Mr. Liu, providing it was with the understanding that nothing was involved on either side.

Charlie reread the letter twice and then put it in his inmost pocket. A sudden confidence filled him. If he could see her and talk to her, he could convince her. His



old assurance came back. "Now I am sure," he said. "The way leads on."

He was right once more. A month later, the wedding day was set. He never knew just what it was that had given him success, for things had not gone very well at the beginning of the call. But at the last he had said with all of the earnestness in him, "Miss Ni, I have pursued but one object, and that was to prepare myself to serve my people. I believe some power greater than I am has guided me. Now that power seems to have led me toward

you. You, too, are devoted to our country. Nothing could more clearly carry out the direction of our lives than for us to work together. Our home may become a far greater center of work than the sum of our individual lives. I pray you to consider the opportunity which lies before us."

Charlie caught a flash from Miss Ni's eyes which sent a great wave of thankfulness to his heart, even before she said to Mr. Liu, "Will you tell Mr. Soong I am willing to think over this matter? One month from today let us talk again more definitely."

That was all. But before the two men had left, Charlie saw a slight flush on Miss Ni's cheek and a little tremble in the hand which filled their cups with fresh tea. He himself was more excited and yet more sober than he had even been in all his life. His mind was a jumble of all this might mean, of confused bits of conversation, of memories of that dimpled smile and those shining eyes, of the whole strong, beautiful face. It was unbelievable. But he knew he was to be married to Miss Ni!

He walked in a daze through the next weeks. On the day the wedding date was set, he had to be reminded by Mr. Liu of gifts he ought to make and things he should do. He was penniless when it was all done—but he would catch up again!

Their wedding day was clear and cold but there was a touch of spring in the air. Miss Ni had insisted that everything be very simple. "Neither of us has money, so why should we be so foolish as to borrow? Besides, the Christians do not follow all the old, expensive ways." How sensible she was!

They were married in the Methodist church to which

Miss Ni belonged. In an attempt to follow the Western custom, each had an attendant—Miss Ni, one of her sisters, Charlie, Mr. Liu. They went up different aisles and met at the altar. Charlie could not hold his head down or look abashed. This was his wedding day! It was like the day he had run aboard the *Colfax* saying under his breath, "My ship! My ship!" only it was infinitely more important.

But he did not dare to look directly at his bride. Out of decency he could not do that, yet he saw from the corner of his eye that she was all in peach color and that instead of the heavy Chinese bridal veil, she had only a thin, pale, soft something flowing down from her head. He got a glimpse of her features shining through. She stood there straight and quiet with her head bowed only the slightest bit, and when her pastor asked for her affirmation of the vow, it came low but clear, "I do."

He was almost sick with joy. Then there came the ring. He had it ready, a broad one of yellow Chinese gold. Mr. Liu had asked the size for him. It looked almost too great on her slender finger, and yet it was beautiful, something more than a wedding ring. He scarcely touched her hand but it was so soft and small that his seemed like coolie hands.

It was over. They were going out together. She had not taken his arm but walked closely beside him and he could smell a faint fragrance, aware that the end of her veil and the edges of her dress touched him. He was eager for the moment when he could look directly into her vivacious, smiling, witty face, full of that radiant personality that was herself. That was how it would be—she as his wife, not his bride! Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Soong!

XIII

LIFE BEGAN VERY QUICKLY. THE TINY home they made began almost at once to exert an influence. It was something, in that time of strange mingling with the West, to find two people who had confidence and assurance, who were able to carry through things which they started and who were never for a moment discouraged. Young Mrs. Soong believed that everything which was worth having had to be fought for, and Charlie believed that when one was on the right side things must come right in the end. The combination of her charming determination and his heady optimism could not be defeated. The little house radiated courage and hope and ideas. At the end of the first year a son was born, to add more joy. They named him Tse-ven.

But teaching in the boys' high school was not enough for Charlie. Soon after T. V., as they called the baby, was born, Charlie resigned from the school and took a position to build a young Men's Christian Association for all of China. The birth of the child seemed to be a spur to him. "My son," he often said, even before the child was able to toddle, "my son will be a young man of China. He must find a place to which to turn—decent amusement and good teaching. What I would do for him, I will do for others." Charlie held the child close, ador-

ing him. "I am a father," he said sometimes in amazement, pondering how this, too, was to fit into his life.

By the time the second child, Ai-ling, a girl, was born, the Y.M.C.A. organization was beginning to take form and to work. Charlie was rushing about over the country, growling at delays and impatient with the courtesies which so obstructed every move. But he looked down at his little girl and said in complete satisfaction, "She is like her mother. See how perfect she is, how good to eat and sleep as she should, how steady in her gazing about! She is a girl, but in this I am no Chinese. I am a Christian. She shall have all that the boy has. She, too, has much to do." He sniffed the fragrance of the little face before he handed her to her mother. An infrequent softness filled Mrs. Soong's face.

"I never knew a man could care so for his children," she said secretly to herself.

By the time the next two girls, Ching-ling and Mei-ling, were born, a great Y.M.C.A. building was rising in Shanghai and there were branches in many of the larger cities. Times were better for the Soong family and they had taken a larger house in the International Settlement, a house with a little garden where the children could play. T. V. and Ai-ling were going to school every day. Ching-ling was a mite of a child, sweet, demure, clinging to her father whenever he was there. He was less boisterous with her than with the others, feeling something unusual in this little child who shrank from noise, even in play. He often carried her about though Mei-ling was large enough now to dig her little toes into her father's side as she sat on his other arm, and scream, "Put Ching-ling down! Put Ching-ling down! She is too big! *I* am the baby!"

It was always so with Mei-ling. Her great, dark eyes and mischievous face sparkling with the force of her determination. "Daddy, hold me," she would say, tottering to him on short sturdy legs whenever he came into sight. Nothing was safe from her investigating hands.

"This Mei-ling is the naughtiest of them all," Mother Soong, as everyone began to call Mrs. Soong, would sigh. "Nothing can be put high enough to be out of her way."

Mother Soong was still as she had been, except perhaps a trifle heavier, a trifle more determined in her way. She still dominated any group and her hand was felt in many parts of the city's life. "Mrs. Soong will be fine in that." ... "Mrs. Soong will manage it." ... "Let's ask Mrs. Soong what she thinks"—these were common expressions. She was aware of everything that went on, and, especially in every new development, her active mind reached out and saw what was at stake. Bitterly she opposed the opening of saloons and dance halls, even the habit of cigarette smoking.

"All that is Western is not Christian," she would say. "I shall fight these things until the day I die."

It came to be a thing always to be considered if someone spoke up and said, "Mrs. Soong will never agree. She will see through it at once."

By the time the last two children, the little boys T. L. and T. A., were born, Charlie was beginning to let his imagination run upon a new plan. The work of missionaries and Chinese Christians had created a demand for inexpensive Chinese Bibles and this demand Charlie decided should be satisfied. "Bibles are too expensive for the ordinary person," he said. "Other books can be printed cheaply, so can the Bible."

It was a thing of which he came to dream more and more—a great printing house in Shanghai. Such a printing house would reach out into the farthest corner of China. There would be Bibles on the backs of booksellers on the streets of country villages, Bibles on the shelves of little, isolated bookstores, Bibles lying open on the counters of shops, on tables in homes, Bibles in the hands of students—Bibles for every Chinese in all the country, north, south, east, and west! Ah, it was only a dream yet, but it was something to be taken out and pondered, to stir the imagination and make the heart beat hard, for some day it would be more than a dream.

And as background for Charlie's dreams and the activities of Mother Soong and all the separate little lives of the six children, stood the Soong home, a very bulwark of security. Whatever inconsequential changes or uncertainties there might be, underneath was the realization that here were peace and safety, here one was not alone, here one was a part of a loyal, closely-knit group. Mother Soong gave out security wherever she was because she was always calm and certain, and Father Soong gave out life and enthusiasm and made the smallest thing interesting because he was interested in everything. He loved his children and played with them and made them feel wanted and important.

Dandling the smallest of the six on his crossed leg, he had a way of half-singing, "When the Soong Six get into action, old Confucius will turn in his grave!" Mother Soong did not quite approve, but she had long since learned that there were things in Father Soong which she could not change.

Charlie had been playing with little T. A. on a spring

evening when Mei-ling looking up from a tiny piece of knitting with which she was struggling, said in her sudden way, "Soong Six puts us all together, three boys and three girls. We are all the same then, aren't we?"

"Of course," said her father, "you are the Soong Six and why should it matter whether you, Mei-ling, are a boy or girl? There is plenty for all of you to do—plenty! You are all going to school, all going to be great, all going to work for China."

"You are the only one who talks of China, Father—you and Mother. Our teachers don't—no one but you. I think they hate China, at least they are not proud of her," said T. V. the oldest, thoughtfully, feeling his way.

"That man said China is asleep," said Ching-ling unexpectedly, almost immediately hiding her face behind her little apron.

"What does it mean?" demanded Mei-ling, pushing back her dark bangs which nearly reached her eyes "How can a country sleep?"

"What man is she talking about?" Ai-ling asked of them all. "I don't remember anyone who said that."

"That man who came the other day, the one with the eyes," said Ching-ling, appearing from behind her screen for a second then disappearing again.

"What *is* the child talking about?" Mother Soong said with some irritation. "She gets the strangest ideas."

"Oh, I know," said Father Soong suddenly laughing. "She means the revolutionist, the doctor—Dr. Sun—who called the other day. I remember he used those words, 'China is asleep,' and the child apparently got just that much. Ha, ha! The Soong Six! . . . Well, that's about right," he said addressing them all. "China *is* asleep but

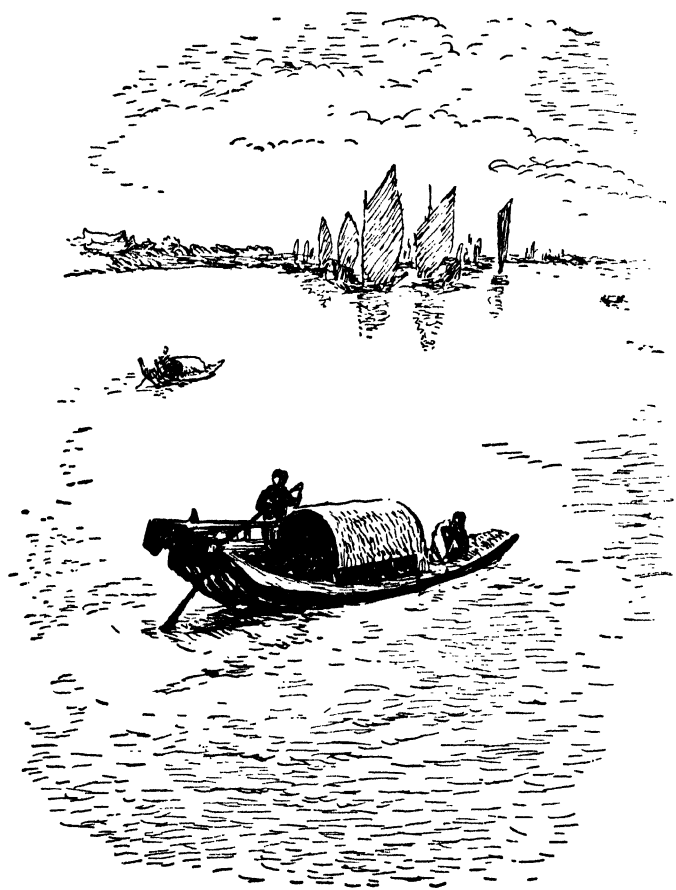
she is going to wake up, and when she awakes, there will be a great deal to be done, for everything will have to be changed.

"It will be something like springtime. Everything has been asleep—the trees bare, the grass brown, the flowers gone, the birds quiet, the fields empty—and then everything is alive. The fields must be plowed and sown, flowers tended, birds must build their nests. Everything must work to fulfill the summer. That is something like what is coming to China, a great awakening, and when it comes, all of us, even you, T. A., will be busy helping China—even little T. A."

The small child looked up from his perch on his father's suspended foot and shouted in delight. "China! China!" he said, without in the least knowing what it was all about. "China," he shouted again but ended in a loud baby laugh as his father swung him high and slid him to his knee. Charlie sat still and looked hard into the small face, then said to Mother Soong,

"If we fail in everything else, if the dancehalls and saloons come in spite of us, if the Y.M.C.A. does not succeed and dreams fail to come true, if China falls into a bloody revolution with nothing gained, or if none of the things come to pass for which this Dr. Sun works, we still will have the children, six children whom we have tried to prepare to serve their country through their work and through their own living."

"They shall be prepared," Mother Soong said in her determined way. "We will give them the best education and training we can get. In place of the two of us, there will be eight to work."



XIV

IT WENT BACK VERY FAR, THIS COMING OF the Soong family to America. It went back to the day when Charlie ran away from his uncle's shop, to the day when General Carr helped him go to college, to the day he married Miss Ni, to the days when all of them, some mere babies, knew that ahead lay work for China and, as part of that, education in America. Mother Soong had determined on it, and Father Soong had dreamed of it, and old friends in Georgia had helped—and now here they were! The Soong family was arriving in America, not casually, but carrying out the purpose of many years.

The ship was slowly drawing into line with the wharf, the crowd of waiting people gazing expectantly up at the passengers far above them on the decks. Cables fell splashing into the water and there were gruff, sharp orders. The excitement of a ship coming to rest after a long voyage filled the air.

"There are no coolies!" shouted T. L. from his perch on the lowest bar of the ship's rail. "Who will carry our boxes?"

"Be quiet," said Mother Soong with a glint of excitement in her eyes although her demeanor was as possessed as usual. "They don't use coolies in America. Horse-drawn wagons will take our boxes to the station."

"Will we ride on a wagon, too?" asked T. A. in a loud whisper.

"Of course not. They are only for baggage. We shall go by carriage or possibly by street car."

"By *motor* car?" asked T. L. excitedly. "Like the picture in the magazine?"

"No, no. There are only a few of them. That would cost a fortune. Besides I would be afraid of them. Now watch while the great cables pull us in close to the dock."

"America," Charlie said leaning toward his wife. "We are here! But the Americans are always in a great hurry. Don't be excited. Just wait where I tell you when we go ashore and I will arrange about things. You will find it is best to let them rush on, but keep your own pace. But the children must stay together. Li Amah, the boys *must* not go running about."

In anticipation of what lay ahead Charlie pushed his hat back, but Mei-ling, with a quick touch, pushed it forward again. "Father," she said softly, "we are in America. You must not look like a wild person."

All three of the girls watched the docking quietly. Everything was so strange. Even Mei-ling was silent. To see so many Westerners instead of the mere sprinkling which Shanghai had, seemed very odd. At last, as the gangway was being pushed into place, she said quickly, "We are stepping into America. Things will never be the same again. How quiet it is—no shouting or fighting of coolies! Where is everyone? White men are pulling the cables."

"Father is motioning to us," said Ai-ling. "Do go on instead of standing there talking. There are no coolies in America and not nearly as many people as in China,

of course. Go on! You can't slip with those little bars across the gangway. Ching-ling, Father is trying to get your attention. Please! What are you looking at? Come on."

"Nothing," said Ching-ling hesitantly. "I have grown so at home on the ship that it is hard to leave. Now everything is new again—all the faces white. We are in a foreign country. Yes, yes, I'm coming."

Mother Soong came last, close after Li Amah and the little boys who danced down the high gangway to the wharf. Mother Soong looked as though she had done this every year of her life, while if anyone was excited or confused it was Charlie Soong who, in his anxiety to have all go smoothly in the transferral to the train for the transcontinental trip, was as wrought up as any school-boy. T. V., calmer than his father, took charge of the keys while trunks and boxes were opened for customs inspections. The red-faced customs officer stared at all the family, then burst out with, "Understand English? All these yours? Setting out to colonize the New World? Lord!"

Charlie laughed good-humoredly and said in English, with his customary Southern courtesy and dialect, "I was in your country some years ago and was so taken with it that I have brought my family here to be educated, feeling that no other country could render them the same service."

The man's face flushed, either from his stooping over an opened box or from the tone of Charlie's words. "That's well said," he said at last. "I'm a foreigner myself but not from your side of the world. Well, luck to you all!"

"Their intentions are good," said Charlie in an aside to his wife as the man retreated, "but their ways are often oddly rude. I dare say we shall find nothing whatever missing from our things as we might expect to do in China. I saw you watching closely but it is really not necessary here. Well, now we are off to the station. They'll take the things directly over. It's all arranged for. Come on, now."

America passed before their eyes in the days which followed. All of them watched from the windows, and to all there came a sense of vast space—unoccupied, waste space. The great timber lands lying full of fallen and rotting trees filled Mother Soong with astonishment. "But why is this wood not gathered and chopped for fuel instead of lying there to decay? Think of the amount of it, enough to cook all the food of thousands upon thousands of people, cities of them! And the trees, the great beautiful trees, the furniture and coffins which they would make! And the fields! There is enough waste space at the edges and in the corners to make an extra field or two. One can scarcely tell whether or not a field is cultivated, it is so carelessly done. When I think of our fields—like gardens—every inch perfectly sown!

"Ah, the waste! It somehow makes me almost ill. When I think of our people! And look outside the towns, outside every town, the dumps full of tin cans and papers! Why are not the cans used for something? With us every can is made into something by the tinsmith—a little dipper for oil, a ladle, a tea canister, a tiny bean-oil lamp. But here all this is thrown away. And papers! We save paper both out of respect for the words written on some of it, and because the rest is useful in so many ways, if

for nothing else, for shoesoles. Really, the waste does make me quite ill."

"This is a different world," said Charlie. "It is as though our dollar is their penny. Even the poorest have what would be ample in China. It costs the Americans more to live, and they expect more of life. They must have water which flows from a faucet, light which flows from a wire, heat which flows from a radiator, or they cannot live. You will see how it is. Perhaps some day it will be the same with our people."

"I cannot think so," said Mother Soong. "These people have something but they also miss something. Where are the little boys?"

"They are in the men's dressing room," said Mei-ling abstractedly. "They are drinking and drinking ice water because they like to see it flow into the little cups. Li Amah cannot stop them."

Charlie laughed a low laugh. "Perhaps some day it will be so with our people," he reiterated.

All six children saw many different things as America flew past the windows—great spaces and great wastage and great beauty. But Charlie Soong was not thinking of these. His mind was full of the cities in the East where his children might learn. He remembered the atmosphere of colleges and universities—all that he himself had felt and learned and which his children would soon feel and learn. He scarcely saw the flat, western towns through which they passed. His face was aglow because of what lay ahead.

Mei-ling, sitting next to T. V., was looking steadily out of the window. "One would be very lonely here," she said pensively. "There are so few people, and the ones

we see look very common in poor working clothes. I don't think I shall like it very much. It is not at all what I thought."

"But Father said things will be very different when we get there," T. V. replied. "He said Summit is a very beautiful small town, with nice houses and fine people. This is the West, he said. They call it the Wild West. People came here only a short while ago. They are just starting this part of the country. It is like one of the very early dynasties in our history when barbarians were sweeping in from the north. This is a little like bits I have read from Shui Hu Chuan or The Three Kingdoms," he added quietly, his eye on his mother. "Don't mention that I've been reading the first," he said further.

"Is it dangerous here?" said Mei-ling. "Do you mean there are outlaws?"

"Well, not exactly, but people are not really civilized yet. There hasn't been time. Look at the man on horse-back driving all the buffalo! They are not like our water buffalo."

"These are very hairy, just like the Western men are hairy," broke in Mei-ling. "It must be the climate or what they eat—so much milk and butter and cheese—the people, I mean. Have you never noticed that Westerners *smell* just the least bit of milk and cheese?" she asked very seriously in a quiet voice. "I knew Ai-ling would reprove me for saying it, but when we talked of coming I often thought it would be hard to live always with that faint odor—not much, you know, just a little."

T. V. laughed outright in his fresh bass voice. "It's not the odor of milk and cheese at all," he said. "Every race has its own odor, so to the Westerners we have a

certain smell, too. We studied about that in school a long time ago."

"What are you speaking of?" asked Mother Soong quickly, bringing her eyes from the window.

"Just the difference in races," said T. V., pushing Mei-ling's foot with the tip of his shoe.

"They are all alike at heart," said Mother Soong. "It is only conditions and circumstances which have made us live differently."

The two young ones were silent until Mei-ling burst forth petulantly with, "When will we reach civilized people again?"

Charlie became suddenly aware, and answered without forethought, "Day after tomorrow about ten o'clock."

Mother Soong looked hard at him for a moment, pursed her lips so that without her knowing it the little dimples stood out and she looked less rather than more severe, and said, "She will have to get over saying things like that. Now that we are all speaking Chinese no one else understands, but later when Mei-ling uses English she cannot be so offensive. Civilized people, indeed!"

"She will never learn to watch her tongue," said Ai-ling with a kind of resignation. "I've told her and told her but it does no good. But I shall be very glad myself to be near cities again. It is frightening to think of one train going over these great plains, just like a tiny creeping caterpillar on a great space. I have to keep remembering that we are all here together and that there are many other people here too, and that the trains come here every single day. But I shall be glad when we get there."

Ching-ling said nothing. In her mind she felt a fear of

the strangeness before her, and yet a sense of peace when she realized that she was in a country made free by revolution, the American Revolution. Here there was plenty. The people, though crude and wild to her Chinese eyes, had clothes and leather shoes. They looked well fed. They looked happy. "Would a revolution against the cruel Manchus make our poor like these?" she wondered.



XV

SUMMIT, NEW JERSEY, WAS, AS MEI-LING had hoped, much more civilized. The girl stood looking from the windows of the convenient but unpretentious house which they had taken, approving the neat, broad streets, the clean-looking children, the flowers and shade. "It's very nice," she said aloud, "only now I must get acquainted. Ching-ling worries about it, but I don't think it will be very hard."

The most difficult thing was the coming separation from Ai-ling. But Ai-ling, even though she clung to keeping the family together, seemed to do so from some inner principle rather than from an emotional attachment. With her usual self-possession she prepared herself to go to Macon with her father.

Thinking that perhaps she dreaded the departure, Charlie said once or twice, "I am acquainted in Macon, so it will not be as strange to us as it is here. Besides, you will find the Bishop and Mrs. Ainsworth warm friends from the first."

"I shan't mind," Ai-ling said quietly, going on with what she was doing. "I have expected all along that I should go first to Macon, so I am prepared."

They all went to the station to see Ai-ling and her father off.

"Doesn't she look nice!" Mei-ling said, squeezing

Ching-ling's hand. Ai-ling stood very slim and straight in her dark fall suit and plain hat. Her strong, beautiful face had a certain stern elation in it and she let no emotion change her expression even when the train began to move.

Mother Soong's face had much the same look except that a great deal of pride mingled with the elation. Ching-ling's face was a little tremulous and Mei-ling was keeping up a continuous chatter to distract her own attention. T. V. stood to one side, his mind very much on his own affairs, for in two days he would be entering preparatory school, and later he would go to Harvard. These little separations would not have much to do with him any more. At any rate, his father would come to see him at the end of the week and settle anything which needed settling. Only he did wish that one's father could show a little more dignity and not look so unkempt! Why, he almost looked like a revolutionist when he got to talking about anything that interested him. Well, they were all going to be separated soon because they were growing up—but what fun they had always had!

The two small boys stood watching the train. They had still not had enough of trains, American trains. Their eyes fixed on the great engine, they were waiting to hear the first exciting puffs and see the wheels slowly begin to turn, pulling their great weight. They had forgotten that Ai-ling was going away to school. They had forgotten everything except the train. "Look," shouted T. L., "now, it's going to begin." T. A. stepped back suddenly. "I don't like the steam in my face," he said, and his hand trembled a little in T. L.'s. He had seen only a few trains in China and they had not been so large.

Ching-ling stood with Mei-ling. She seemed very far away. She was looking at Ai-ling, who now had found a seat next to a window and was smiling a little. When Ching-ling had that look on her face, one could not tell her age. She was both young and old. It was as though she could see beyond what was happening now.

The train began to move. Charlie waved. Ai-ling waved. They all waved. The family, turning away to go home, was silent until at length Mei-ling sighed and said, "Well, on Monday Ching-ling and I start to school. I am anxious to see what it will be like and then we can get acquainted, too."

Ching-ling said nothing, nor did any of the others speak until at last the smallest, T. A., piped up very sadly, "Ai-ling always helped me with things I couldn't do. She is much better than Li Amah. Now she won't be here to help me."

Monday there was a little coolness in the air, for which Ching-ling was grateful. Now she could wear a thin coat over her new American dress. "I *do* feel a little funny," she said privately to Mei-ling. "It is so funny to see so much of my legs showing and to feel nothing snugly around my neck. I feel only half dressed."

"Well, you look fine," said Mei-ling, dancing about in the freedom of a short plaited skirt and a middy like her sister's. "I'm glad you got a red tie in place of a black one. It makes a little redness shine up into your face, and your hair is much nicer than any of ours. Mine just has to be straight bangs across, I guess. There is nothing else to do with it. Do you know what I heard a woman say yesterday? She forgot that I could understand and she said, 'Doesn't that child look like a little Japanese

doll?' *Japanese* doll! I looked at her very hard. I knew Ai-ling would not have wanted me to, but I could not help it. Now I hate bangs more than ever, because it's true. Japanese dolls do have bangs. It is disgusting. And yet, see how I look without bangs!" Mei-ling pushed up her bangs and held them up exposing a high, broad forehead. "There is just nothing to do about it," she said resignedly.

Then they were starting in at the school, a private school. Both girls were surrounded by other pupils the moment it was discovered that they understood everything and that they were human. Ching-ling drew the older girls by her quiet sweetness. Mei-ling soon had a little clan of younger ones who were fascinated by her great sparkling eyes and her endless vitality.

"Tell us again about what you saw in the Shanghai street. Tell us again how you play that game," they would demand at recess time. "She's Chinese, but she is very, very nice," many a girl told her parents during the evenings of the first week of school.

Back from settling Ai-ling at Macon, Charlie Soong was at home only a few hours before he rushed off to see how things were with T. V. "Everything's all right," he said between bites at supper that evening. "Ai-ling is registered in the sub-Freshman class at Georgia Wesleyan College and Bishop Ainsworth has her especially under his care and Mrs. Ainsworth is treating her like her own daughter. The Wesleyan grounds are far more beautiful than when I saw them. Of course I keep forgetting how long ago that was. I haven't the least doubt but that it is the place for the girls as they grow old enough to go.

"Ai-ling seemed very happy. She has a nice room and

roommate and you know how she is. She will get along splendidly. She said her clothes were all right, just about what the girls are wearing. She will use her satin Chinese things for party wear. She told me to tell you they would do very well. Now, T. V. wrote you after he arrived? Let me see the letter."

At last all the children were in school. After his trip to see T. V., Charlie Soong came back vastly satisfied. "It is as we planned," he said in the quiet of the night, to Mother Soong. "T. V. will do well. So will Ai-ling. The others are here where we can see them and help them. Ching-ling is not worrying too much, do you think? The people are very kind. Her teachers will soon see what sort of girl she is. Mei-ling will always get along. The little boys—if only they do not get into fights! The American boys will call them names, of course, but then, I always thought Foreign Devil was the name of all Westerners when I was their age."

XVI

IN CHARLIE'S MIND THE FOUR YEARS SPENT in New Jersey were merely preliminary to getting all three girls to Wesleyan in Macon, Georgia. His feeling for those years of his early experience in the South clung to him, and he was secretly restive until the time should come when all three could be there.

The year in which Ai-ling entered Wesleyan College as a sub-Freshman was 1904. The year before she was graduated, 1908, the other two girls went to Macon also. It was as though a great load had been lifted from Charlie Soong's mind. Often during the four years he had said to Mother Soong, "It is different there. It is hard to say exactly how, but people have more time to be kind—they treat everyone as their friends. The air is warm and gentle. Things are very beautiful. It will be best of all when the girls are there."

And now the three girls were in Macon. Ching-ling was registered in the sub-Freshman class as Ai-ling had been, but Mei-ling was too young for this. By a special arrangement she was allowed to live in the college dormitory and be tutored by Miss Margie Burks, the daughter of the professor of English literature.

When it was all decided, Mei-ling was delighted. She was a girl in her early 'teens, small for her age but as

vivacious as ever. "I am to live in the dormitory with all you girls," she said, her face full of delight. "I really prefer it to being the only girl in some other house," she added naïvely, to the cluster of American college girls around her. "I'll do errands and chores for you if you like," she said, by way of strengthening her position. "I can do manicures very nicely, or trim hair or curl it. You ask Ching-ling, my sister."

The group of girls to whom she was talking smiled and nudged one another. "Adorable, isn't she!" they said.

Miss Burks and her mother opened their home to the three Chinese girls and they were very often there with a few American classmates. Ai-ling was in her senior year. Ching-ling heard many things about her from the girls and from the professors. Prompted by her pride, she once took Ai-ling for a walk over the campus and tried to tell her what she felt.

"I am very proud to be your sister and very anxious to do the best I can," she said in her hesitant way. "People have said so many nice things about you! We could not know it all while we were so far away. But now we know. It is more than just your grades. We knew about those—so very high—but everyone loves you and you have done so much else. Your readings are so lovely—and done in English.

"I wonder whether I shall ever feel altogether at home in this language. If only I could have seen you do the parts from *Madame Butterfly*! And I know how you looked in that pink brocaded Chinese dress. Oh, Ai-ling, you are so smart and so attractive! And you understand everything so quickly! You laugh so freshly when a thing is humorous! Something holds me back. I wonder what

I shall do after you have gone. But I am so proud and happy, and I just wanted to tell you."

"Ching-ling, if half of all you have said is true," said Ai-ling, "it is only so because of my parents, my opportunities, and my friends. I should be much more than I am because of all these. You will find that everyone here pushes you along and inspires and helps you. Nothing holds one back. Everything is helping. I've had a good time, as good a time as any girl could have in a country not her own. I've had so much I could never have had in China, but now I am getting near the end and I begin to feel I want to get back.

"It will be strange to go back after the years here. I shan't know where to take hold, but Father and Mother will be there—can you *believe* they will be leaving so soon?—and they will help me. At least I can be of use to Mother. She will be doing so many things. But you and Mei-ling will be here, T. V. doing postgraduate work, soon, in Harvard, and only T. L. and T. A. in Shanghai. I sometimes think of what Mei-ling said the day we left China, 'Good-by, Shanghai! We won't be seeing you again until we are grown up!' And we are grown up—that is, I am.

"It was very dear of you to speak, Ching-ling. I shall not forget it, but I think that probably you will do greater things than I shall ever do. You are more unselfish—you sacrifice yourself more. I know that. Yes, it's true, however much you sake your head, and I'm not sure but that a great deal of sacrificing will be needed for China. I am not sure I can do it. Perhaps I am not big enough. I want to reform and change things, like Mother, but to lose myself in something greater than myself—I'm not sure.

Well, we don't have to live all of life today, do we? So let's go in. It's getting late and I can tell you are tired. And always remember this, Ching-ling. I don't want you to suffer. I want you to be happy."

But Ching-ling would not go in until she had said one thing more. Holding Ai-ling back in the shadows she said intensely, "I have no way of telling how much of what you said was said in kindness, but it is very hard to know when one is happy and when one is not, or when one is doing wisely or when one is doing foolishly. But I shall try to do what you say—enjoy my time here and later serve China in the way that seems right." They were silent for a moment in the growing darkness.

"Yes, of course," said Ai-ling, with a sense of alarm creeping over her. "After all, we shall be together a great deal when you come back and so we need not talk in this way," she added in a lighter tone.

"I wish I knew," Ching-ling said in her old uncertain way. "I am not even sure of that, are you?"

The time had come when Mother and Father Soong could return to China. They had brought the two younger girls to Wesleyan and seen them well settled there. And now they were at peace. Satisfaction rested on Father Soong, and Mother Soong said over and over, "They could not be in a better place." But the fact that they were to be separated was hard to bear and they all dreaded the moment of saying good-by. It hung over them and could not be forgotten, spoiling the last little times together.

At last Mei-ling burst out with it to Miss Burks. "I really wish they were going today instead of tomorrow," she said. "It sounds a bad thing to say, but looking ahead

to it is very hard. It's like knowing you have to have a tooth out."

"I know exactly what you mean," Miss Burks said, longing to show sympathy but scarcely knowing how to do it with this small, self-possessed, outspoken Chinese girl of whom she was already growing very fond.

And then they were gone—Mother Soong, Charlie Soong, and the two boys. Mei-ling turned away from the receding train, her eyes bright with tears, and then laughed suddenly, "Did you notice Father? He was just dying to be back in China. How did he ever wait this long, I wonder? It must have been only because of us. Well, now, I'm not going to be a silly. We wouldn't want to be anywhere else, any of us."

As she spoke, she was looking at Ching-ling out of the corner of her eye. Ching-ling never said anything when she was most distressed and she never wept. Mei-ling had noticed that years ago. Now her face was set in its accustomed sweetness and there were no signs of distress, but Mei-ling fancied she was a trifle pale. Ai-ling walked on the other side of her but was not trying to talk to her. Walking so, Ai-ling looked exactly like her mother and had the same bearing. She had been at Wesleyan long enough to forget a little this first sharpness of separation. Yet, walking so, the three of them seemed very close and it was Ai-ling who gave them all the feeling of oneness. It was the same thing which Mother Soong had, a gift of giving security to all around her, of dominating any situation and controlling it.

So now Ai-ling turned quietly toward her sisters and said in her calm, sure way, "I am very happy we can have this one year together, or the part of it that is left.



We can help each other, but each of us will have to build for herself, and we can. We have health and ability and brains, and we have a great purpose before us. Nothing so great ever lay before anyone as lies before us."

A quietness settled down on them all, a quietness and a sense of peace. The early winter dusk had begun to fall and the college buildings were shrouded in softness as they came into sight. Girlish laughter rang out, clear and silvery, while a deep-toned bell made the air tremble. Someone was standing in the shadow of a hedge at a corner of the campus where their path turned in, and a friendly voice said,

"Well, here you are. You are having supper with us tonight. I started to come along, then I thought, no, that if I were in your place I'd rather have just my own family. But now you are part of our family, so come along."

It was Mrs. Ainsworth. Her cordial voice seemed to welcome them and envelop them in a feeling of friendliness and kindness.

Mei-ling suddenly reached out and took her hand. "You make us love America very much," she said.

XVII

FOR THE GREATER PART OF THIS ONE school year, the three sisters were together but, as Ai-ling had said, each must build for herself. Ai-ling had already had four years in Macon so that none of it was new to her and she easily held her place as one of Wesleyan's most attractive and most brilliant students. What Ching-ling had heard about her sister was the true feeling of her friends. Ai-ling was a splendid student, beautiful, confident of herself, easily master of any situation.

When something touched her fancy, she laughed aloud in appreciation, and when in the dramatic work, in which she specialized, she played a part, she played it wholeheartedly, without self-consciousness. Ai-ling had had her world on a leash since the day she was born, and she still had it there. It gave her what she wanted, helpless to do anything else. With Mother Soong's incomparable gift, she saw immediately to the heart of everything.

Both Ching-ling and Mei-ling had felt this when they were very small, Ching-ling tending to keep utterly silent if there were anything she wished to conceal from her older sister, and Mei-ling using all her cunning in order to hide any small secret she might have. "Ai-ling *always* knows!" she had often wailed as a little child. But Ching-ling by her silence kept Ai-ling from reading many things

which were hidden in her heart, for not even Ai-ling could surmise the meaning of unspoken words.

So now, in college, Ai-ling was swirling in the excitement of her Senior year, popular, happy, accepting all that came her way as her due. Often she said to Ching-ling, "But college is more than studying and high grades. Have all the fun you can, too. Learn how to do it from the American girls. It is not so hard." She flashed bright smiles at Ching-ling as she passed her, hurrying to a class or party. If only Ching-ling would lighten up and let herself have some fun!

But Ching-ling seldom smiled. Sometimes a soft light came into her eyes and often a faint quiver touched her lips when the answer to some problem suddenly came clearly to her, or when some other girl made a ludicrous mistake. But she never really smiled nor laughed aloud. She looked happy, she was happy, but happy only because she was moving towards her goal. She was getting that education for which she had come and she was getting it thoroughly and well.

Many of the more thoughtful girls watched her and appreciated her. Often a girl said of her, "She is sweet—a sweet, sweet thing." Or, "There is something on her mind and I believe it's her country." Articles which she began to write bore out the idea of her preoccupation. In the college papers articles of hers began to appear, serious discussions on the outlook for China. Ai-ling read them, amazed. Ching-ling had been following every move which took place in her country, through the newspapers. Ai-ling went to her with the first article.

"You are still thinking of all this, when you have more than four years in this country ahead of you?"

Ching-ling, why can't you be a little carefree and enjoy yourself?"

"I am enjoying myself," Ching-ling said thoughtfully, "but that does not make me forget all about China. How can I forget her? Besides, I don't know why, but it seems I shall never entirely forget things Dr. Sun said. I don't know why it is, but those things seem to have eaten into my very heart. Sometimes I almost wish I could forget them—and then again, I know that life would lose its meaning if I did. But, Ai-ling, I'm not unhappy. I'm happier than I've ever been in all my life because I'm getting ready for what lies ahead, though exactly what it is, I can't be sure."

It was the only satisfaction that could be had from the girl. She was prettier than ever now, her deep, dark eyes often alight with excitement, her sensitive lips tremulous with feeling, her jet-black hair waving softly around her face. Her reticence held her back from familiarity with anyone, but when a point was under discussion in class, particularly a point in history, she rose fearlessly to her feet and gave her opinion with good reasons for it.

Mei-ling was perhaps closer to Ching-ling than anyone, for though Mei-ling was in many ways only a vivacious child, she had come to know the moods and deep-set feelings of her older sister. Often, when Ching-ling was through her work for a little, Mei-ling would rush in upon her and cry, "Come, Miss Burks says I must go out for a little air and exercise. I don't want to go alone. You come with me. Besides, I would rather have you than anyone. Ai-ling always has so many little things to do. She says now she is graduating, she hasn't time for walks."

And so they would put on coats and caps and go out into the fresh, cold air, Mei-ling almost dragging Ching-ling along in her headlong way, and Ching-ling suddenly relieved to be away from everything for a little while. She could say things to her little sister which she could say to no one else, for Mei-ling had imagination and could easily see why such things might be said, but she never held them over until another time or tried to put two and two together. She was simply a means of sympathetic relief for Ching-ling, when ideas and problems seemed to have confused her.

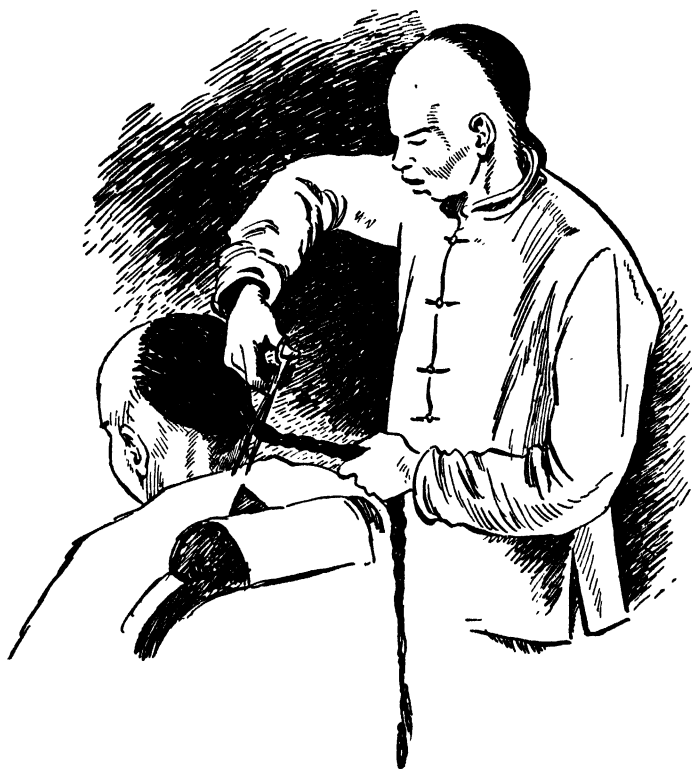
"Of course. I can see how you would feel that way," Mei-ling would say heartily, "but tell me the rest. You always make me think of Father. You know he thinks of these things, too. That is why he was so anxious to get back to China. I expect he has begun to do something about the printing house, already. Both Mother and Father do so much. They don't just have a good time like so many people in Shanghai do. I often think about them and try to decide why it is."

"Father used to talk so much with Dr. Sun. I really think Father is a revolutionist," Ching-ling said seriously in a low voice.

"What will it mean?" asked Mei-ling, breathlessly. "Will he be in danger? He has had his hair short a long time and Chinese men are not supposed to, are they?"

"Well, no. Of course you know how the queue was supposed to show that we are in subjection to the Manchus who are our rulers, but I remember that once when Father had been to the harbor in Shanghai, oh, a long time ago, he laughed and said to Mother that he had always wanted to go to a barber shop which catered to

Westerners and he did it as much in defiance of the Manchus as because he liked short hair. That was a long time ago, but of course he was in America as a boy even before that. Father will never stop doing a thing because it happens to be dangerous and I am quite sure



he wishes to change the kind of government our country has under the Manchu rule.”

“Well, I’m glad he does,” Mei-ling rattled on in her downright way. “If a person is always afraid of things, he is never anything but afraid. But I wouldn’t like to

have anything happen to him. Nothing has happened to him and he has done all sorts of interesting things. But I don't know what I want to do when I get through school. I don't even know what I want to study in college, only I'd like to take everything—everything! I wonder how long I would have to stay to finish all the courses here. I think that is what graduations ought to be—taking all the courses—knowing all the college can teach. But most of the girls don't seem to feel that way. Why, some of them groan terribly! One would think they were made to come and that they wanted to see how little they could do."

"Students do not all come for the same purpose," Ching-ling said briefly. Her mind was elsewhere. Would Father Soong be in the revolution? When would it come? Before she got back?

"You are not listening," said Mei-ling. "What are you thinking about now?"

"I was just wondering," said Ching-ling as from a distance, "whether the revolution will happen before we get back."

"Before we get back, probably," said Mei-ling sagaciously, "but it may not be over yet when we get there. I've been hearing about the Fifty Years' War and the Hundred Years' War, and China is so large and has so many people that I don't think a revolution could get over quickly there, do you?"

Although Mei-ling and Ching-ling often talked together in this way while Ai-ling was busy with other things, in the home of Miss Burks and her mother, or in the home of Bishop and Mrs. Ainsworth, the three girls were always together. There were no other Chinese in Wes-

leyan College while they were there, so that although they were friendly with everyone, they naturally fell together.

Miss Burks was constantly astonished at the unexpectedness of Mei-ling. There seemed to be no way of predicting her and it was this quality, along with her charm and pertness, which made her quickly the favorite among the girls as a whole.

One day Miss Burks asked Mei-ling to describe Sherman's march through Georgia, and to her astonishment, the girl replied instantly, "I am a Southerner, and the subject is very painful to me. I should like to omit it." It was the same tendency toward forming strong loyalties which she had had as a very young child, a tendency which did not weaken as she grew more mature. "I seem either to love or hate a person," she sometimes said.

The college year drew toward a close. The Soong sisters looked much like other girls now in their Western dress, and when Commencement day came, Ai-ling, in her cap and gown, appeared just another Wesleyan College graduate. No one thought the three sisters would ever become famous or unusual. Ai-ling had been at Wesleyan five years and was graduating with honors and leaving for China, calm, proud, happy, respected and loved by everyone. Ching-ling in her pretty flowered dress was a little flushed, more sturdy than she had ever been, warmly loved by her classmates and ready now for her Freshman year. Mei-ling was still almost a child, a small doll-like girl, who won everyone to her without the least intention or effort. She sat beside Ching-ling, and when Ai-ling stepped forward for her diploma, whispered, in spite of a gentle pinch from Ching-ling,

"There, she's done it—she's graduated, and now she's grown up. Things will never be the same again."

Mei-ling's words hung over Ching-ling after the exercises were over and the three of them gathered in the dormitory. And even Ai-ling, who so seldom paused to let feeling alone sweep her, could not hold her emotion back.

"The year together is over," she said tremulously, "but it is only the beginning of all the years together which lie ahead. Don't let us for a moment forget that. When we all get back, we will all be working together for China."

Ching-ling said nothing. The stillness which came to her when words failed to express what was needing to be said, once again stole over her and held her.

Mei-ling suddenly broke the silence, never stopping to realize what her words might suggest to the three of them sitting there, on the eve of separation.

"But you will be there years before Ching-ling, and Ching-ling will be there years before me! And the revolution will come! I am sure of it! I think we shall never be together again. Oh, Ai-ling, does it have to be so?"



XVIII

MONTHS LATER, AS THE FIRST STEP toward the carrying out of Mei-ling's prophecy that the three of them would never be together in the old way again, came the news that Ai-ling was now secretary to Dr. Sun, who was then in Japan where he could with less danger carry on his plans for the revolution. Then followed letters from Ai-ling telling of her having met a certain Dr. Kung who was engaged as a Y.M.C.A. secretary in Japan.

Ching-ling read the letters with a distinct sense that the ground was falling away under her feet and Mei-ling

went over and over them in greatest excitement, reading aloud the details with keenest relish.

"Oh, Ching-ling, listen to this! He's a descendant of Confucius, in the seventy-fifth generation! Oh dear, Father will have to change some of his little ways! But how suitable it all is for Ai-ling. Won't Mother be delighted! And of course, it's a rare honor to be a descendant of Confucius for he was a great man. And Dr. Kung has money! Listen to this. His people are all drug store operators and bankers. Ai-ling says the drug stores are chain stores like the American Walgreen stores, reaching from Mongolia to Canton.

"She says, too, that he is 'a gentleman, studious, gentle, and rich.' Oh, Ching-ling, I'm sure it is more than an acquaintance. Ai-ling will marry him. I am sure of it, and of course it *is* suitable for her. But somehow it does not fit with her being a secretary to Dr. Sun, does it? I can't make it out. Things are so funny. Are you glad, Ching-ling—I mean about Ai-ling?"

"I don't know," Ching-ling said slowly, with a vague, unhappy look on her face. "In a time of great national change, it seems strange to think of ancestors and money and a person's gentlemanly ways. But then, I know little of such things. They will be married, that is all. We must accept it."

In the winter of 1911-1912, the first great move of the Chinese Revolution took place. The power of the Manchus was overthrown and the form of a republican government was set up. Ching-ling wrote an article for one of the college papers, entitled, "The Greatest Event of the Twentieth Century." To her it was more than an article. It was an announcement to the world. This thing

of which she had heard almost since she could remember, had taken place. It was a fact, if an incomplete one. The in-pouring of new influences through missionaries and traders, through native Christians and returned students, had affected enough of the great mass that was China to cause an upheaval and a new direction. Ching-ling saw it in its true setting, recognizing its drama and its immensity.

Mei-ling rushed in with letters, reading excitedly. "It's done! China is a republic like America and Dr. Sun is the first president. The Manchus are hiding and running for safety. Many of their quarters in the great cities have been destroyed. But in the North the people are still not wholly with Dr. Sun. He has been abroad gathering funds for this event. Oh, Ching-ling! The revolution has come! I knew we would never get back in time."

Ching-ling was scanning newspaper clippings with white lips. "It is only the beginning, the very beginning. People in the inland areas do not even know that it has taken place. Oh! Dr. Sun is resigning in order to win over the North. He is resigning the presidency in favor of Yuan Shih-kai so that the north will join in. I can't understand it. Yuan hasn't the same ideals as Dr. Sun, I feel sure. At least he never has had. It is going to take a long time, all our lifetimes, probably, and Dr. Sun is not a young man now. Oh, Mei-ling, I'm so glad I'm nearly ready to go back! One more year! One more year! But so much can happen in that time. Here, let me see the letters myself. What is Father doing?"

It was constantly in the girls' minds. "What is Father Soong doing?" They read every letter and every paper carefully, over and over. Ching-ling was finishing her

Junior year and Mei-ling was ready to enter the sub-Freshman class. They were together everywhere now and a halo of excitement hung around them. A revolution was taking place in China! The Soong family might be in-



volved! Their intense feeling was infectious. American girls, who otherwise must not have even heard of the events taking place far across the Pacific ocean, watched and whispered excitedly, "I think Ching-ling must have news. Look at her. Let's ask."

Then belated letters came. One from Mother Soong told glowingly of Ai-ling's marriage. And she wrote of the festivities: "Dr. Kung is a most genial host and a very fine man. Moreover, he makes money easily, seeming to have an inborn ability with money. Ai-ling suits him perfectly and she is beautiful. I can think of nothing better for her. They will make their home here in Shanghai, for which I am grateful. Things are so disturbed now. One cannot tell what may happen. If China could learn only the good, constructive things from the West, but we learn so many bad habits, it seems. There is much I would like to say of your father, but I am afraid to set it down in too great detail. Let me say only that he is being of use to the cause he loves and maintains old friendships."

"He is with Dr. Sun," Mei-ling burst out. "He is working with him!"

"Yes, I think so," said Ching-ling slowly, "but not even he sees it in the same way that Dr. Sun does. I can't describe it. Father wants China to change and he believes that revolution is a way of making it come about. But Dr. Sun wants everyone, even the workers and the peasants, to have their due. He is interested in all human beings who suffer and he is working to give everyone a chance. I can't quite explain it but there is a great difference in the way they look at it."

"Well, of course, a person must see the practical side of things," said Mei-ling, looking hard at her sister. Then she added hesitantly, thinking as she spoke, "You know, Ching-ling, I sometimes think you are a little of a dreamer. You don't stop to decide whether a thing will work out. You just give yourself to it anyway. I don't

mean to criticize, for I am only your little sister, but it frightens me a little. I'm afraid you will give yourself to something that does not deserve you, suffer for some cause that won't work out, or won't think enough of yourself! I guess that is really it—but everyone must think of himself a little because no one else will. Ching-ling, promise me you will stop to think of yourself before you ever undertake anything when you get back. Promise me, Ching-ling! I can't be happy unless you do."

Mei-ling's large eyes were on her sister, beseeching. Mei-ling was now nearly sixteen, still rather small, slight without being frail, with color in her face and the same sparkle and animation which she had always had. "Promise me," she said again, with a little of the look of her mother around her mouth.

"It's no good promising," said Ching-ling quietly. "You know it's no good. When I have to do a thing, I just have to do it. It has always been that way. I've just known that a certain thing had to be said or done. It was like a madness pushing me. I could not hold back. I have to do what I feel convinced is right for me to do, and I am happier doing that than anything else, in the end.

"So you see, there is not the least good in my making any promises. It would only make it harder to know I had to break them. I'm still a silly thing, Mei-ling, just as I used to be. I haven't learned much in college—only a little better use of English and things out of text books. But I am as bad as ever with people and I still haven't forgotten China and just had a good time, as you call it. Well, now soon it will be summer and then just one more year—one more year."

"And it's true we'll never all be together again," said Mei-ling. "Even if we should, Ai-ling is Madame H. H. Kung, and Father is I don't know what, and you will be giving yourself to something or other, and I shall be the only one left to have a good time in Shanghai. But I mean to have a good time. Oh, I'm going to work hard and all that, but on the side I'm going to play a little, too. I don't want to get married right off or join a cause. I want to be just Miss Mei-ling Soong, belle of Shanghai! Doesn't it sound silly? But I am silly, Ching-ling, darling, and there isn't much use in pretending I'm not—not to you, anyway."



XIX

AND THEN IT WAS CHING-LING'S AND Mei-ling's last year together. Ching-ling moved steadily along toward her graduation, seeming to gather up all that her years in America had given her, sorting out what was valuable and storing it away in her mind. Her papers and her responses in class showed that this process was going on, and always the small sweetness of her personality seemed in odd contrast to the depth and magnitude of her mental activity. To look at, she was still not so very different from the little slim thing that had stood against the curtained doorway of the Shanghai home and said so quickly, "So shall I," when Dr. Sun had just said feelingly that he would give his life to the revolutionary cause and to it alone. She was still like the little fairy lady painted on the ancient vase, small and wraith-like and given to deep silences. But in her written words and in her recitations, there was a strong, smoldering fire far below the surface but portending much.

It was because of the evidence of this that one day her history professor read a paper of hers, drew a deep sigh, pushed up his glasses, tipped back his chair, and settled himself to think. "It's the last sort of thing one would expect from a mild-looking Chinese student, a girl at that," he thought. "Of course what is happening

in her own country is affecting her, but when she goes back, if she says such things and they fall into the wrong hands, she may get into trouble. I don't know much about it, but I always understood that they were more than conservative, especially about women. Where does she get such ideas? And one would think her life depended on it."

Pondering, his mind returned to the day in his classroom when Ching-ling had risen and spoken of her hopes for her country. Her voice had been just as soft as ever, her manner just as mild—but her eyes! Enough fire smoldered there to light a whole continent. "She's an enigma," he thought, "but can I let her go out feeling as she does without a word of warning?"

The word was said when the professor handed back a paper. It happened that Ching-ling was the last to pass the desk on her way out of the class room. As her hand reached out for the paper, her professor cleared his throat and said, in as conciliatory a way as possible,

"You have said some very interesting things there, Miss Soong. If you have a moment I should like to ask why you feel as you do on some points. I realize, of course, that the fact that China is now going through a period of revolution would somewhat affect your feeling, but I think I am correct in believing that you felt the same two or three years ago, judging by some of your papers then."

"I have always felt the same," said Ching-ling quietly. "I have not changed, though what is happening, of course, makes one's thinking more clear."

"You do not mean you felt this way as a child? Your home influence, surely, from what I know—"

"I do not know why I have always felt so, unless it is that it seems to me to be a feeling hard to escape with evidences on all sides. We had a friend, the man who now leads the revolution, who used to come often when I was a child, and talk with my father. I heard what they said and it made a strong impression on me."

"You think it was the influence of this friend?"

"I think that may have been partly it, but as I said, with evidences on all hands of the injustices of society organized as it is, it seems to me to be a feeling hard to escape. I cannot but believe in a complete change for my country."

"People will vary in that, of course, Miss Soong, but I stopped you today because I felt a little uneasy after reading this paper of yours. It is powerfully written and well written, but I am not sure that I should care to have it taken as a model of what you have learned in this history class. I—"

"Yes, I understand, but I thought that this paper was to be a personal expression, an interpretation of the student. Surely no one would take it to be anything else? I am only looking for the truth."

"You are right, but one wants to be sure that what one arrives at is the truth and not an illusion of truth. What seems to you the most important thing you have learned from our history work, Miss Soong?"

"I think it is the fact that a people makes no real step forward in its development nor in its place in the world until there is an emergence of the mass spirit—that so long as a monarchistic government, whatever its outward form may be, oppresses the spirit of the masses, there is no real advance nor achievement."

"That is simply stating what you have always felt."

"Yes, only now it is more than a feeling. Now it is a fact based on historical evidences and being now proved, besides. The work in history has made this very much more clear to me, sir, and I have enjoyed it. I thank you, sir."

Ching-ling bowed and taking her paper went in her usual demure way out the door. Her professor stood where he was, looking after her, the smile of courtesy which had unconsciously come to his face as she bowed, still mistakenly remaining. "So that's what I've been teaching!" he muttered suddenly, sinking into his chair and pushing up his glasses again. "I wonder if any of the other students are of the same opinion! But probably not more than two others have thought enough even to wonder what it was all about. Teaching is only a part of it, anyway. A person who is going to do something and be someone will do it anyway, regardless of teachers or courses. She may get some of it from her old dad, Charlie. They say he fought his way up—and her mother looks as if the very heavens couldn't shake her. But this girl looks like a June rose and, if I'm any good at all, appearances are very misleading. I'm sorry to have her go. Great thing to have at least one in a class who is digging and thinking—real stuff in her!"

Ching-ling was not troubled by the professor's words. For a very long time now she had come to expect a certain amount of opposition. It seemed to her that as far back as she could remember, she had gone a rather lonely way, partly because of this feeling that she was linked up with some great movement out beyond herself, and partly because she could never mix easily with people. And now

she did not expect to find herself in a place crowded with popularity. She, or destiny, or chance, had already decided the general direction of her course and she could not change it even if she would, and she would not. She knew this from a deep sense of inner necessity. It was, as she had once said to Mei-ling, like having a responsibility which one could not leave if one would or would not if one could.

But she told Mei-ling a little of what the history professor had asked and Mei-ling was at once troubled.

Full of worry, she said quickly, "Do you think he was displeased? Do you think that he will give you a lower mark because of that paper? Oh, Ching-ling, why can't you spare yourself a little! You can believe these things but why must you put them into a history paper? You will never, never spare yourself."

"They belong in a history paper, if they belong anywhere, while I am in school," Ching-ling said doggedly. "Anyway, it won't affect my grade, if that matters to you. I've said what I thought in all my papers and the grades have been good. There was an A on this one. He isn't that kind of man. Goodness, Mei-ling! We are not working just for grades, are we? I hoped to learn something as well."

"Oh, of course. But can't one do both? If you have learned then your grades will be good, too. Isn't that logical? All I meant was not to lay yourself open to trouble where it will do no good."

"I know what you mean, but I have to do things my way. You know how I am, Mei-ling. I can't cover up or pretend. I just have to come out with it if I speak at

all. But now, tell me about how your classes are going. Did you make the test you were worrying about all right, and don't you like the professors? I think they are anxious for us all to do well."

"Oh, of course I made it—an A. And I like the professors. But I have an idea! Promise you won't be upset or disturbed, or that you won't think I'm insane?"

"Go on and tell me, Mei-ling. You know there is no use in my promising anything. I just will or won't. What is it?"

"Well, I *love* Wesleyan and the people have been *wonderful*, but when you've gone I just think I would like to be near T. V. Isn't that insane after all the time I've had here? But with both Ai-ling and you gone and T. V. the only other Soong in America, why shouldn't we be nearer each other?"

"Where would you go?" asked Ching-ling, her face full of questioning.

"Wellesley," said Mei-ling. "That's near Harvard and I've always wanted to go, ever since I've found how the girls all feel about it. They would just about all rather go there than anywhere, if they could. Do you really think it is such a bad idea?"

"Why, I don't know," said Ching-ling. "I have to think a little. I can see points in its favor. If you want to do it, we shall have to write home and get into touch with Wellesley at once. Let's think it over for three days, and then discuss it."

"All right," said Mei-ling brightly. "It would be very nice to be near T. V., you see, because you know how it is. After all, we are not Americans, and he is more than just Chinese like us. He's part of the family. But I

haven't set my head on it. I'll do what seems best, and I do love it here. No one could possibly not love it, could they?"

"No," said Ching-ling. "It's very, very lovely, and soon I shall have to go."

XX

THE THREE DAYS OF THINKING OVER THE matter of Wellesley and a letter from Father Soong brought the question to a very quick decision. Charlie Soong in his usual scrawled grass characters wrote, "Mother and I have been wondering whether you, Meiling, would be happier to be near T. V. after your sister leaves. T. V. has never lacked affection from you and you two will be the only Soongs left in America for the present. Of course it will be a wrench to have you leave Macon after all our years of connection there, but I think the friends will understand. It will be as you wish, entirely, of course, but the thought just came to us. We have applied to Wellesley tentatively, though it may be too late.

"Let us know when you write next time. You will hear directly from Wellesley. I dare whisper now that I am doing work with Dr. Sun. Now that things have gone favorably with the revolutionists, to a degree at least, one dares be more bold. But the undertaking is so tremendous and there are so many dangers and possibilities in it! It is not easy to make a democracy overnight. The people are not ready. Dr. Sun is not always well, and he is a little of a dreamer and he is no militarist. I sometimes think he cannot succeed unless he has someone to lead

the military part of it for him. The north is by no means in real sympathy, to say the least, and is not likely to be under present circumstances. China is too big for everyone to be united. Why, farmers right here around Shanghai scarcely know there has been a change of gov-



ernment, much less what the form now is! But I shall do all I can to help Dr. Sun."

"I'm not so sure about his helping Dr. Sun," broke in Mei-ling. "I mean I am not sure he will really do it. What do you think, Ching-ling?"

"I don't know. I've never known. Father isn't an aristocrat. He has always worked almost as a coolie

would work, partly, I think, because he was here in America as a young boy, and partly because there have always been so many things he wanted to do. But he has never been interested in politics. He and Mother are both teachers and reformers but not political leaders. No, really, Mei-ling, I don't think Father will stay with Dr. Sun very long. I can't imagine it, quite."

"I think you are right, Ching-ling. It is going to take self-sacrifice for anyone to follow Dr. Sun and only a dreamer will sacrifice to the point of suffering, and I don't believe Father is a dreamer. But it is much more comfortable not to be, so let's not worry about that. I'm glad they could give Dr. Sun a little friendly help, because after all he is an old friend of the family, but I don't think we want to go much further, do you?"

"I don't know, Mei-ling. It's very hard to see ahead, but I don't think any revolution can be a success, nor anything else, either, unless some are willing to give themselves to it and forget about sacrifice."

Ching-ling's eyes were very far away as she spoke. Her face was as Mei-ling had seen it a thousand times—remote, serene, a little white. And the eyes held a smoldering light. Mei-ling looked at her a moment and then, anxious to come back to something more warmly human, she reached over and took her sister's hand and said in her old petulant way, "Well, of course, someone probably has to give himself to the cause of China's revolution—more than one—but not any of us, do you think? We can do a lot for China in more solid, better ways. Come on, let's forget about sacrificing. Put Father's letter away. I'll write him at once about Wellesley, for of course now it's more settled than ever. Since I can't take

all its courses, I'll take the hardest. You'll see! Come on now. Let's go and have something to eat. Not ice-cream—you don't like it and I only pretend to, but green tea and some of those little cakes—you know the ones I mean. Oh, Ching-ling, how few more times we can do any of these things together here! Come on! We have just fifteen minutes!"

They rushed off together, Mei-ling in the lead. How few more times they could do these things together! The thought ran through everything like a dark thread, almost spoiling the pattern of their happy days.

Winter came and went. Spring came and passed into early summer. Mei-ling was on the Wellesley College roll. Ching-ling was in her last week. T. V. would be coming for Commencement, arriving the very last moment because of the difficulty of leaving his own work. The three would be together for a few hours. Everyone was excited. There were new things ahead and the old could never be as it was.

And then it was Commencement Day. Ching-ling stood in cap and gown almost exactly where Ai-ling had stood. Mei-ling looked, then whispered to T. V. with a strange catch in her throat, "How different she is from Ai-ling! Ai-ling stood there with her head held high and that look of hers around the mouth. But Ching-ling—she hasn't changed at all! She looks just as she always does when she is thinking and I believe she has forgotten she is graduating!"

"None of us has ever really understood her," T. V. said in his low tone. "She seems to be made of something different. I know when she was little, I could never tease her in quite the same way as I could the rest of you.

She rarely came back at me. She never cried, never told on me, but the few times she did come back she tore me to pieces. I was surprised every time it happened. I just couldn't believe she had it in her. And now she is graduating! Two of you done before I am!"

"Yes, but none of us has a string of degrees after her name. Oh, I'm *so* glad I'm going to be near you, T. V., and I'm *so* glad Father and Mother had thought of it, too! I feel much better about it than if I had been the only one who had the idea. Look, they are beginning. I always get excited. I could cry if it would be decent. Tell me to behave!"

T. V. sat with Mei-ling, tall, mature, handsome in his thoroughly Chinese way. He was perfectly at home in America, perfectly at ease in the crowd where he sat with his sister. Before long he would be ready to go back to China. He was interested in banking and finance. A great work waited for him. He was glad he was himself, T. V. Soong, and some day, he felt sure, he would make a name for himself and add to the family name, too.

"She's horribly white," Mei-ling was whispering, biting her lips in agitation. "Things are so bottled up in her. One can never tell how much she is feeling. There, she has her diploma and now she is behind the others so we can't see her. Ching-ling is so different from the rest of us. Do you think so? I mean, she doesn't seem to think of herself—I can't say exactly what I mean!"

"I know what you mean, but be quiet now. The President is speaking."

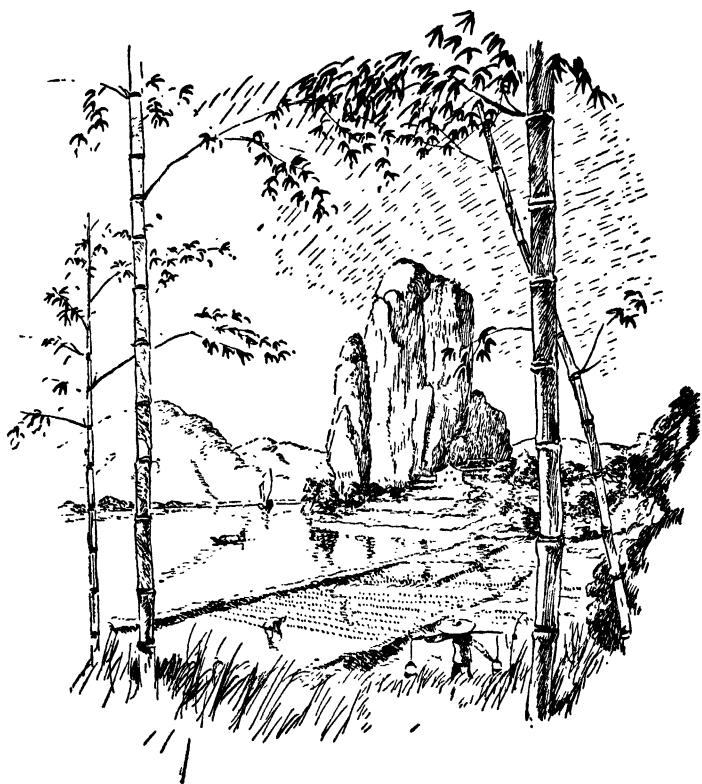
So Ching-ling was graduated from Wesleyan College. It was the year 1913 and she was returning at once to

China with friends. Of the three sisters, only Mei-ling was left in America. With a great up-surfing of the heart the two girls said good-by to Wesleyan, to Miss Burks, to the Ainsworths, to many others who had made Macon home to them for many years. As the train pulled out, Mei-ling waved in her half-serious, half-dramatic way, and said under her breath, "Good-by, Macon, Georgia! When we see you again—if we do—we will be old and doddering, with our great lives behind us!"

But this time Ching-ling laughed and said, "I'm glad no one can hear you through the glass. For you are so silly, Mei-ling, so very silly, almost like the day we left Shanghai when you were talking of good-bys and patent leather shoes and Father's hair, all in one breath! Yet I really hope you don't change, for I love you silly. And I shall never for one moment forget Macon, Georgia, and what its people have given me."

As the train pulled out they were silent, looking out the window. At last Mei-ling said in a broken voice, "There is no use in pretending. There are not such people anywhere else. I wonder how I could be such a goose as to leave!" Her great eyes were blinking hard and she blew her nose impatiently. "You never cry," she said resentfully.

"I think I'd feel better if I could," said Ching-ling quietly. "Something holds it in. And yet, every student has to leave when he is through, and all I want to do lies ahead. It's very, very confused still, but it is there and I suppose I'll know what to do when the time comes."



XXI

IT WAS TRUE THAT THERE WAS NOTHING clear before Ching-ling as she set sail for China. All of her preparation was carefully arranged in her mind so that she knew what facts and abilities she had, but the direction in which they were to be used was still hidden. She might, she sometimes thought, follow after Mother Soong as a Christian worker, or she might follow the suc-

cessful way of Father Soong and try to improve China without changing the government very much. She might do as Ai-ling had done—marry into an important and at the same time pleasant position. But there was another way which Ching-ling did not see clearly enough to recognize because it was a secret within herself, something so long-continued and so disguised and hidden by all that had happened since she had first been vaguely aware of it that though it disturbed her, she could not tell what it was.

It had begun when as a very tiny girl she had said, to the surprise of all the family, "That man said China is asleep. The man with the eyes." It had come again when, trembling with some unknown excitement, as a slim girl in her 'teens she had said suddenly, without herself expecting to, "So shall I," when giving her life to the revolution was meant. It had come again when she wrote the article, "The Greatest Event of the Twentieth Century." It had come when she had written her history papers. It had come many times when she had been alone with her thoughts. But she could not know where it led. She only knew that the Chinese Revolution called her and that in some way, she did not know how, she must give herself to this new, growing democracy.

That much was clearly decided. It had been decided all her life, she saw now. What she needed now was to find how she was to give herself.

One of the centers of the revolution was still in Japan, as it had been when Ai-ling returned to China. Dr. Sun still went to Japan as to a haven where he might find rest from the turmoil and difficulties of the task he had undertaken in China. He was there now, recuperating

after the first lap of the revolution, and planning how to educate the masses for the democracy which he had tried to bring them. It had been arranged that Ching-ling was to stop in Japan, for there the Soong family also often spent periods of time.

When she stepped ashore at Yokahama, a strange excitement held her. Memories and feelings of the past rose up before her. Almost vaguely she was aware that Dr. Sun and another man had come to meet her. An uncertainty, almost a fear, rose up and nearly strangled her. Dr. Sun looked much older and even ill.

The younger man stepped forward and said graciously, "I am your brother-in-law, H. H. Kung. Ai-ling would have been here, for we are summering in Japan, but she expects her child soon and does not come out much. Of course you remember Dr. Sun Yat-sen."

"Oh, yes," said Ching-ling faintly. She was so full of the up-rushing memories of him that she could scarcely see where she went. She was back again! This man was the leader of the revolution! This was the heart of the great feeling which had always swept her and swept her still. His face was lined and old and there was a pallor and a weariness about him. Dr. Kung was splendid in his health and bearing and there was a look of prosperity about him—and now he was to have a child! Ai-ling was to bear a child!

In a little while the two sisters were together again. Ai-ling's arms around her and Ai-ling's face against hers were almost like her mother's. Instantly Ching-ling thought, "She is more like Mother than ever, and she is beautiful even now. It will be a son, just as she hopes—

an illustrious son. The fates could not do otherwise to Ai-ling."

Ai-ling drew her in the old possessive way. "Well, two of us are together anyway, Ching-ling, even though you seemed so doubtful when I mentioned our all being together in the old way, that time. When we get back to Shanghai, you to get into work and I with a child of my own, things will be very much as they were, and before we know it Mei-ling will be coming along. Time goes very quickly after one has gotten out of school. Don't you like my husband? He is so elegant and so noble, Ching-ling. Everyone likes him. They can't help it."

"Yes, he is splendid—wonderful," Ching-ling murmured. She searched her mind for the right words. She wanted to say more, to sound more sincere, but she could not put her mind on it. For all her surging thoughts were obsessed with the picture of the frail elderly man and her realization of his significance. And she recoiled from what Ai-ling was saying. The words irritated her, at the same time that she subconsciously scolded herself, saying, "She is your sister and she speaks of her husband. You must be interested and show consideration."

But her mind went rushing on. In her sudden, unpremeditated way, she heard herself saying quickly, "Does Dr. Sun need secretarial help? Do you think I could be of use if I stayed here?"

"Why, yes, I think you could, if you really want to," Ai-ling said slowly, eyeing her closely. "He was looking for someone not long ago. What he wants is not just an ordinary secretary but someone who can help in the actual composition of letters and statements and the preparation of some books. He did not want me to leave

when I did, but of course I had other interests and I could not give them up to go on being secretary to Dr. Sun! Would you like H. H. to speak to him about it?"

"Yes," said Ching-ling. "I think I could do what he wants and I should be very happy doing it." Something rushed over her as she said it, an excitement, a happiness. This was what she had wanted ever since she was a little girl, to work for the Chinese Revolution, to help Dr. Sun. She was trembling and her face was deadly pale. One would have thought a terror rather than a happiness had come to her.

"You are too weary and you have been seasick," said Ai-ling quickly. "Sit down and we shall have a little fresh hot tea. I always bring my own leaves along from Shanghai. Now tell me about Mei-ling. Does she look the same and did she not mind leaving Macon? It seemed a strange idea to me."

Mei-ling looked the same, only prettier, Ching-ling told her. She did exceptionally well in her school work. Everyone liked her. She was full of fun and pranks. But she wanted to go to Wellesley to be near T. V., though she had wept when they left Macon. She was going to take all the hardest courses and make a name for herself, then come back to Shanghai and have a good time! She was going to do everything!

Ai-ling was laughing aloud and even Ching-ling was smiling as she listed it. It was so like Mei-ling! She had always been that way from the time she was a tiny child protesting sharing her father's arm with Ching-ling, wishing she were a boy like T. V., always wanting to say exactly what she thought regardless of how it sounded. Great-eyed, mischievous, winsome, petulant, demanding

Mei-ling, the youngest of the three! Perhaps she was a little spoiled and yet she was warm-hearted and generous, too.

"Your hair is lovely that way," she had said, "and your dress is beautiful. You are beautiful, Ai-ling, and so sweet." Or that day to T. V., "Ching-ling is different from the rest of us. There is something about her." She never withheld praise. She never withheld anything, but rushed forward into words in her impetuous way.

Both sisters came back from thinking of Mei-ling, and Ai-ling said in her old manner, "Well, it won't be long until she is back, and it is all right if she wants to be a belle of Shanghai. I'll give her a start. And now come along and rest a little. I have a room for you and a maid will do anything you like. I always bring my own along because I can't bear the Japanese maids with their chatter. Don't you like this little house? It's just for the summer, you know. I love the garden. H. H. chose it because of the garden, I think. He is very considerate, Ching-ling, especially now.

"Even if you stay here a while, Ching-ling, you must be sure to get to Shanghai for a visit before long. You must see my home and meet all my friends, not to mention getting back to Mother and Father. I don't know whether they will forgive me for letting you think of delaying here. But it won't be for long, and then everything will be as we planned. Of course I'm always busy! There are so many people I must entertain—my position and all—but my family, of course, comes first. And here I stand talking. You must rest! It's so lovely to have you here, Ching-ling. I won't forget about the secretary business. I'll go and find H. H. right now."

XXII

MEI-LING WAS ENTERING THE FRESH-man class at Wellesley. Not liking Wellesley on her first day, in spite of all her high anticipations, she walked into the office of Edith Souther Tufts, then Dean of Residence, and said in her soft Georgian accent,

"Well, I reckon I shan't be stayin' round heah much longeh."

But despite this first disappointment, she quickly adjusted herself to new surroundings. She had been in America so long that when a new girl cornered her and said in sheer surprise and unbelief, "Are you really Chinese? Why, but you talk American!" she laughed and said that she supposed the only Chinese thing about her was her face.

Like most of the Freshmen, Mei-ling boarded in the village of Wellesley. Going about in her low heels and wearing skirts and blouses, she was almost without identity in the crowd. The only touch of the Oriental about her was sometimes to be found in the brilliant silk of a blouse.

But she was now carrying out what she had half-laughingly promised Ching-ling, choosing the most difficult courses. She decided to major in English literature and minor in philosophy. Even her electives she planned to

take from among difficult subjects, and, too, she elected to study French, piano, and violin all four years.

Writing out her outline of work, she sent it to Ai-ling and Ching-ling in Japan and to her parents in Shanghai. Her sisters laughed and said, "She almost has to do it after all she has said—and of course she can!"

Mother Soong said, "It's sheer nonsense! Is she trying to kill herself?"

But Father Soong looked up from the letter with a twinkle and said, more to himself than to his wife, "She'll thrive on it. It will give her something to think about!" He was remembering a day when a small girl with an ink-smeared face had looked up from her writing to say, "I wish I were a boy like T. V. so that I could do things."

In philosophy class a sweet-faced, dimpled girl sat next to Mei-ling. Mei-ling saw at once that she failed to grasp the points in the class discussion. The girl's face held a blankness which she tried to disguise by extreme preoccupation with very copious notes and little attentions to side issues. But when she was forced to take part in the discussion itself, it was quite clear that she did not actually see the real meaning of the questions asked by the professor. With a sinking of the heart Mei-ling realized her classmate's distress.

"If she doesn't get this first part," she thought with dismay, "she'll not get any of it. She is worried almost sick. Poor thing! She isn't made for philosophy but she can grasp it if she learns how to go after it." Mei-ling contrived to watch out of the corner of her eye. There was no doubt about it. Her neighbor was almost in tears. Mei-ling could not stand it. She would see her after class. There was no sense in the girl's failing.

"I know just how you feel," Mei-ling said warmly later, out under the trees. "I've felt that way a thousand times, starting in on things that were so very strange to me. But you can do it. I suggest you get a copy of Professor Calkins' own book. Regardless of how her course is arranged, you will find that her theories and ideas will still be the same. Get the book, study it, and come around every evening and I'll help you all I can. It will help me, too, of course. I really want to."

A sudden light broke over the girl's face, then faded. "But you don't need any help. All your answers and discussions have been brilliant!"

"Oh, but we've only begun," Mei-ling broke in. "It will help me all through the course. I'll be very much disappointed if you don't do it. Come, I'll tell you where I live, and the book, you know, is called 'Persistent Problems of Philosophy.'"

But in all her rush of work and college activity, dashing about on the tennis courts while the fall weather lasted and enjoying swimming all the year, Mei-ling still paused to think of Ai-ling and Ching-ling and of China. Before Christmas word came that Ai-ling's son, David, was born. She read the letter over and over. "I knew things could never be as they were again," she said to herself, in her old way. "It changes things when people marry and have children. And Ai-ling was always the one who wanted things as they were. But she sounds happy—fine husband, position, and now a son. But she will be like Mother. In a little she will be doing a thousand things. Home won't hold her. Her mind is too active. Her influence is too great. She will be wielding a great deal of power. Ai-ling is that kind. But I would like to

see the baby. She is still teasing about my being a belle of Shanghai. Oh well, and I may be for all our joking!"

Letters from Ching-ling were more disturbing. She wrote of her work—of endless letters, statements, of portions of books on which she was working. "I've fallen right back into my Chinese script," she wrote with evident delight. "It comes just as easily as before, and Dr. Sun is pleased because he says it is simple and legible, which his is not. He is too weary and too ill to write much in his own hand, at any rate. More and more often he dictates to me and then says, 'That is what I want to say, but put it into the proper words for me.' Mei-ling, I think I have never been so happy! I think that something of this sort is what I have always wanted to do, ever since I was a tiny girl. I am next to the very center of the revolutionary movement, I am learning what has actually taken place, I begin to see the tremendous proportions of what will have to take place.

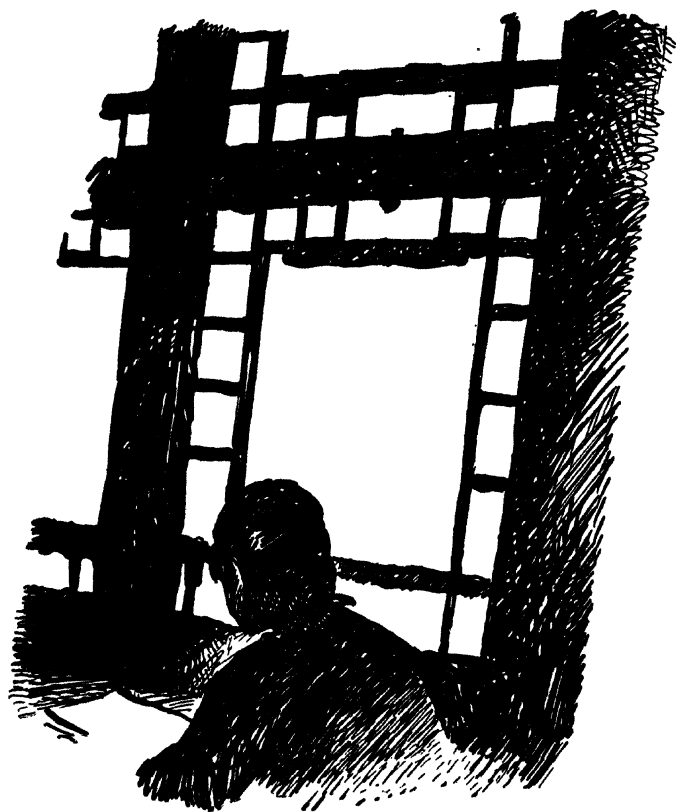
"And I see all this against my fresh background of study of other world events. We get to discussing things, Dr. Sun and I. We are like father and daughter, he is so much older. And it pleases me to have him say in his quiet, appreciative way, 'Ching-ling, you are helping me to see things from a distance again, to get them in their setting!' He is an unassuming man, Mei-ling, a man who wants no glory for himself. Sometimes, when he is thinking of the past he says, 'I loved medicine—I loved the healing of disease and the cutting out of evil growth, but it was not enough. It did not go far enough. The trouble lay deeper, in the very set-up of our social system. And now I have undertaken this, not being sure I can succeed.' He is very depressed sometimes, Mei-ling.

He hates intrigue and he hates militarism and yet he knows it will take both to make the revolution succeed.

"I sometimes think he must have someone else to depend upon in these things. In fact, he sometimes mentions a young man, originally of Chekiang province—a military man called Chiang Kai-shek. It seems he first heard Dr. Sun speak, in 1910, to his organization which was then called the Tung Men Hui (Common Alliance Association)—you know it has branches here and all over the world. Chiang was studying militarism in Japan at the time. He had of course heard of Dr. Sun before but he had joined the Common Alliance Association thinking it was no more than a Chinese Residents' Club. Then he heard Dr. Sun speak, and that seemed to be the beginning of things.

"Dr. Sun says that he seemed to wake up suddenly to what the revolution was about. He wrote letters, made speeches, and began to enlist friends. Dr. Sun began to give Chiang certain military responsibilities and so far he has executed them brilliantly. Dr. Sun says that he has a passion for system and orderliness such as no other Chinese military man has ever had. There is no doubt but that he is an unusual man, Mei-ling, and it may be that he can carry forward the military front of the revolution. But I have written too much. Isn't it splendid about Ai-ling's little David? I do not know when I shall get to Shanghai now that I have undertaken this. I am really busy, but when I can do so in justice, I shall go, even if only for a short while."

"Ching-ling sounds happy," Mei-ling thought to herself. "She has to give herself to something, but I don't want her involved in any senseless martyrdom. I won't



have it! Why, she will soon have been back almost a year, and still she has not been to Shanghai. I can hardly understand it. Of course she does have heavy responsibilities where she is—I can see that—but even then!” Mei-ling puckered her brow in thought and forgot that finals were only a short distance off. She was thinking of Ching-ling, sweet-faced and mild to look at—Ching-ling discussing the Chinese Revolution with Dr. Sun.

“She sounds too happy,” she said again in a troubled way, “but he is at least twenty-five or six years older than she. Well, of course, it’s just that she has always been interested in this revolution. Think of it! All her life has been colored by it, when there is so much else she could have thought of. Well, she is different from the rest of us, that is all. I must send this letter on to T. V. I wonder what he will say. I’ll be seeing him in a few weeks now. How nice!”

XXIII

CHING-LING'S DEEP HAPPINESS LAY IN the fact that she was conscious of only one thing—she was satisfying the hunger which had been in her ever since she was a small child. Her new life centered in the realization that she was working for the revolution. Out of what she did for Dr. Sun would come freedom and happiness for workers and peasants. Out of what she wrote for him would come new understanding of the real meaning of the revolution for which he worked.

There were times when she was so moved by what she wrote that she was forced to stop a moment to steady herself before her writing could flow on again in its even regularity. She was like a small wandering stream which had been trying to find its way to the ocean and now had suddenly and inevitably discovered that it was a part of a great torrent rushing toward the broad waters beyond. She knew that this was the thing which almost as far back as she could remember, she had half felt was lying ahead. This was the thing which she wanted to do, the thing which she had to do because of some inner need within herself, a need she could not control.

As she worked with Dr. Sun she learned all the background of the revolution, from its beginning to the present, what its difficulties were, what its promise for the

future. She learned how great an undertaking it was, and began to see how much Dr. Sun in his idealism was failing to realize the practical difficulties. But even while she saw this, her heart went out to him the more because she, too, was partly idealist and she could understand the yearning in him. Besides, she was young and difficulties did not look large to her yet. They only excited her. The very justice and rightness of the revolutionary principles stirred her. They must win and they would. China would yet be a democracy.

Ching-ling was like a girl beside Dr. Sun Yat-sen. She was like a girl, yet all the motherly, protective instinct in her rushed out to help him. With others she had always been aloof, reticent, withdrawn, but with him she could show herself, for he understood her soul. He, too, had reticences and times of withdrawal. He, too, was moved by the same awareness of the people and their needs. Ching-ling had never been able to show herself to any of her family except a very few times to her father and a very few times to Mei-ling, and even these times had yielded but partial revelations. Only when a feeling had so obsessed her that she forgot herself, could she speak, and then but brokenly and hesitantly, to those she felt instinctively might understand or at least not misunderstand. But for the most part she had lived alone until now, and now life opened before her and she was aware of herself and alive.

Often as she worked through the quiet hours, she would look up to say to Dr. Sun, "Now if I put it this way, it will be your meaning, will it not?" or, "You wish to imply this, do you not?" or, "If I rewrite the whole section and make it run like this, would that be what you

want?" Peace flowed through her. She was doing what she wanted to do.

At night sometimes she lay awake thinking again of words she had written, of things they had said in conversation, she and Dr. Sun. A new and overpowering idea was beginning to come to her, but she held it off and in the quiet of the night tested it to make sure of her heart.

So many times, as she worked, she saw that Dr. Sun was troubled, half ill, and needing some permanent, new strength which he could have with him constantly. She caught herself saying within herself, "I can help China and I can help Dr. Sun. He needs me," but she held back, knowing that there could be no faltering or uncertainty or changing of minds in this. Her sense of integrity made her know that if she gave herself to the revolution in this way it was a final thing. She could never draw back. Her father believed in change for China, but not the kind of change Ching-ling now knew Dr. Sun was planning. Would her decision mean a break with her beloved family? She lay in the quiet of the nights thinking of it and plumbing the depths of her own soul.

But her sense of devotion and her inherent gift for sacrifice had actually decided it at the moment when the thought first came to her. Even though she lay awake questioning herself and trying to make sure lest there be uncertainty later, within herself the decision was made.

Ching-ling could not see herself as she had always seemed to her family—retiring, fearful, shy, unassuming. She only knew that she could not show herself. So now she could not see that it was out of keeping with what

people knew of her for her to decide to give herself in her own way to the Chinese revolution.

She and Dr. Sun were working long, hard hours now, finishing up some work. After it was done Ching-ling was to go to Shanghai to visit her family, a visit so long delayed already that even Mei-ling in America could scarcely understand it.

"If you just note down ideas as they come to you while I am gone," Ching-ling said to Dr. Sun a few days before she left, "I will organize them and then amplify them and show them to you for your approval when I get back. It will be quite easy for me and will save you a great deal of work while I am gone. Of course the correspondence will have to go on as usual, but someone else can take care of that more easily." Ching-ling was looking at her work and her voice did not falter.

Dr. Sun in his quiet way had his deep-set eyes on her. "You are coming back, then? What if your parents object? Your mother—your sister?"

"I am coming back in two or three months," Ching-ling said in a low voice but with great finality. "I want nothing but to give myself to the revolution. Nothing else could satisfy me. And so long as I can be of use to you, my place is here." Her eyes were on her papers still and there was a faint flush on her cheek. Suddenly she looked up and into the elderly man's uncomprehending eyes. She must know how he felt.

"Dr. Sun, I have thought long and carefully and I know in myself that nothing could make me happier than to be of service to you and to the revolution. I could save you from the disturbances of publicity. I could help you in your work as I have been doing. I could take care

of you. I should like to give myself to the revolution in this way." Her eyes were down again, but her flower-like face was almost transfigured by the strength and light which filled it, and her soft voice was unaccustomedly clear.

There was silence for a little and the sounds of the Japanese streets came in the open windows. Then Dr. Sun rose and walked toward Ching-ling, who had risen to meet him.

"You are so young," he said almost brokenly. "I am almost an old man—I have a grown son. I live in the uncertainties of being a revolutionary leader—and you would dedicate yourself to helping me! Ching-ling, I can scarcely forgive myself for ever letting you hear the things I said before you as a tiny child. I can scarcely forgive myself for bringing you again into contact with this thing—this hunger, this disease, this torment which gives the heart no rest once it is infected with it. Won't you wait? Won't you go back to Shanghai, and live there awhile and see then how you feel? I cannot accept now." The man's face was a little pale and his fingers, laid on the smooth surface of a nearby table, trembled.

But Ching-ling's eyes were sparkling with the merri-ment which Dr. Sun alone had ever seen.

"Come," she said, trying to speak lightly, "there is only one thing I want to know. Will you have me or not? I know you have been married before. But that is past and has nothing to do with this. I know about Sun Fo, your son. Everybody is coming to know him. As for regrets because I heard you speak when I was a child—life would have been meaningless, without a center, if I had not had this great thing to live for. Dr. Sun, do you

think it would have meant as much for me to go to parties, or even to help in Mother's reforms, or to be merely an educated Chinese woman doing a little here and there, as it does for me to have lived with this cause always before me? You can't think so. Ever since I was a little girl I have dreamed that some day I would be able to do something that would help millions of people, that I would have a part in one of the greatest events that is ever to take place. Now I want to know only one thing, whether or not you will let me be with you always to help you in this work, as your wife." Her eyes were searching his face and met his eyes, full, now, of deep feeling, but still with a stricken look in them, too. She had been too bold. But she had to be bold.

"Ching-ling, I am not the one who must be considered. I am old. You are young and—"

"But there is the revolution," she broke in brightly. "It knows no age and needs us both."

"Yes, but Ching-ling, I know how you are—one to sacrifice yourself too much. You have always been that way. I have heard your father say it."

"But it gives me happiness. And I don't call doing what one wants to do, sacrificing. Dr. Sun, will you have me so?"

"Ching-ling, beloved child, I don't know what to say. You know my heart. You have known it all along or you would never have thought of doing this."

"Your heart?" Ching-ling asked, looking into his face. "You want me," she said slowly, with certainty. "Then it shall be arranged. I am very, very happy. All my life lies clear and plain before me."

"But, Ching-ling," Dr. Sun said quickly, taking one of

her hands between his, "your parents must consent. I cannot wrong them or you."

"I shall speak to them," Ching-ling said clearly, "but it is all decided."

"Not until you come back, or let me know," Dr. Sun replied, looking steadily into her face.

"It is decided," she said again, like a small child who might stamp her foot, pretending anger, yet with laughter in her face. "Aren't we living under a democracy now, and can't we decide this thing for ourselves? I thought you were rather responsible for it! Now say it's decided!"

"Ching-ling!" the man said with a deep indrawing of the breath. For an instant he held her in the circle of his arm so that her head rested just below his shoulder, then he released her and said again, while the light left his face, "But you must ask your parents!"

"Yes," she murmured, and gathering up her papers left the room.

XXIV

OVER AND OVER ON HER WAY BACK TO China from Japan, Ching-ling told herself her family would not want her to marry Dr. Sun. Her mother, especially, would not like it. But this knowledge only moved over the deep peace and happiness which filled her like disturbing ripples over quiet water. "He is a revolutionist and the fate of no revolutionist can be certain. He is old, and he has been married before. Mother will oppose it for all these reasons. Yet I shall marry him." Again and again this was the end of all doubts. She would do as she planned. She was not disturbed. In this mood she came home.

But Shanghai was so greatly changed that she scarcely knew it. Great Western buildings towered where low Chinese houses had stood before. Traffic which had been a tangle of sedan chairs, wheelbarrows, rickshaws, and a few carriages, now was made up of many more rickshaws, fewer chairs, street cars and even a few automobiles. The waterfront was like a great European city. Even Chinese dress was much changed. The street where the Soong house stood was so altered that their house looked small and almost shabby among the new buildings all around.

"Mother and Father ought to move to a better place," Ai-ling said, almost at once, as they all gathered in the

old house after meeting Ching-ling. "But Father is attached to the place and Mother is so busy she scarcely sees it. I really believe they would forget to have it repainted and the walls re-done if it weren't for us. But, Ching-ling, you look better than I have ever seen you—better than last summer when I saw you in Japan. The work agrees with you, but don't you tire of it? If Dr. Sun only knew his own mind and told one what to do! But he is so indefinite. He almost expected me to do part of his composing for him! Oh, here's the nurse with David! Look, Ching-ling! He is exactly like H. H., isn't he? I hope he is going to be like him as well as look like him." She took her merry, chubby child from the arms of his nurse.

"You have been a long time getting here, Ching-ling," Mother Soong broke in in her own way. "Who ever dreamed that, when you decided to stop off in Japan, it would mean stopping for almost a year? You must have done well with Dr. Sun. But it got so here that we scarcely knew what to say when people asked about you. Yet you do look well. You couldn't have been working so very hard, to look so well. What exactly was your work? Your Chinese writing must have come back easily."

Mother Soong had grown a great deal older in the half dozen years since Ching-ling had seen her. She noticed at once that her mother was rather a heavy woman, that her hair was gray at the temples and streaked with white where it was combed smoothly back over the dome of her head. There were fine wrinkles around the eyes and nose and the dimples at the corners of her mouth were gone, but her skin still had its soft fineness. Only her hands were the same, the small, plump,

shapely hands with the broad gold wedding ring and the heavy one of carved jade.

"I simply did any writing for Dr. Sun which he wished me to do," Ching-ling said quietly, aware that the old reticence was creeping over her. "Sometimes it was letters and sometimes articles and sometimes parts of a book he is writing."

"You are quite posted on the revolution," Mother Soong said, eyeing her keenly. "Well, I am glad you are back anyway. Now we need not make further excuses to people, and goodness knows I can use an extra pair of hands in all the things I have undertaken. I began to wonder what I would do if you didn't come soon. There's your father now. He was bitterly disappointed not to be able to go out to the boat to meet you, but he simply had to be at this meeting. Yes, here he is!"

"Ching-ling!"

"Father!" Something rushed over her. It was not home without Father. "You are the same, exactly the same. Mother has changed a little—only a little—and you not at all." Ching-ling looked at him carefully. His clothes might have been the very ones he had worn when last she saw him. His hair as always was a little wild, his hat crumpled and thrown aside, his face eager with feeling.

"So you are a revolutionist," he said, laughing and leading her back to her seat. "My mild, quiet Ching-ling, a revolutionist! Scarcely believable! But tell me, did you really enjoy Macon? Did you learn the things you wanted to learn, did you have a good time, and did you really want to stay so long in Japan?"

"Yes, to all the questions," Ching-ling said, laughing

a little. "Everyone does not have a good time in the same way, Father, so I may not seem to have had as good a time as I did. I enjoyed the work in Japan very much. I felt I was of use and I was able to learn a great deal more about the revolution than I had known before."

"It was a good experience," Father Soong said with finality. "I am glad you had it. But now you must have a little time for rest and for parties and fun and then we must find the best things for you to do here. Both your mother and sister seem to be very busy all the time and I am sure they have been counting on you. Is Dr. Sun returning to China soon?"

"He said little about it," Ching-ling said. "I think he expects to be in Canton part of the summer, but not here, I think. Of course he cannot plan these things ahead. A great deal has to depend upon how things work out."

She longed to say more, but she must wait. She must not kill the first pleasure of her homecoming. She would do all she could to help here for a little. Perhaps they would see how things were. She loved them all—Mother Soong because of her uprightness and her determination and her steadfastness, Father Soong for the warmth of his heart and his enthusiasm, Ai-ling for her ability and generosity and the fact that all their troubles were hers. And the baby—how sweet he was!

Suddenly she was saying, "I'd like to hold David a little. He's the first grandchild in the family. There, he is not afraid at all." The child, now a few months old, sat supported in her arms and blinked his great dark eyes at her. Ching-ling felt a sudden rush of feeling. This child had everything, young, able, wealthy parents, a great name. She would never have a child. The revolution

would be her child but if because of it the babies born in huts and hovels, in poverty-stricken farmhouses, in dark rooms in crowded cities, had a better chance in life, she would not mind. No, she would never hold a child of her own like this, an intuition told her, but in the few moments that she sat silent looking at little David, she resolved again to give herself to Dr. Sun and to the revolution.

"The baby is as silent as you are!" laughed Ai-ling. "You both look as though you were deciding the fate of all China. Mother, Ching-ling had better rest awhile before we all go out to dinner. H. H. is coming and we are all going to the big new restaurant on Nanking Road," Ai-ling said by way of explanation. "Everyone goes there now. The food is the best in town. Yes, Mother has fixed your old room. Isn't it nice? It makes one think of Mei-ling for both of us to be here. Well, it isn't so long now. She has been having a good time, hasn't she? She likes Wellesley and I suppose everyone likes her. She'll be having finals soon now and I expect her grades will be what she prophesied. She will be with T. V. part of the summer—but then she has written you, of course.

"Oh, it's lovely to have you near, Ching-ling, even if I don't live here any more. Tomorrow you are coming to our house. I am so proud of it. We are having some guests in the evening—for you. Just eight of us altogether. But now rest a little, for it is getting late. Aren't Mother and Father wonderful? Exactly as they were. Mother is really important and Father's printing press is beginning to get a real reputation. But both of them work fearfully hard. There, I keep right on. I'll go and keep David while his nurse gets her supper and then you can rest." Ai-ling

went quickly out. Her bearing was as it always was, assured, dignified, beautiful. Motherhood had changed her from a girl into a woman and there was something about her which made people pause when she spoke, look up when she entered a room.

Ching-ling took off her outer Chinese dress. She had gone back to her own native clothes as soon as she reached Japan. Then she paused and stood thinking, after her sister had left the room. "She has only begun," she murmured. "Ai-ling is the most able of us all. She is like a queen—afraid of nothing. She can help or hinder many. I wish the revolution had such a one instead of me. But Ai-ling would never be a revolutionist. Revolutionists are never like that. I wonder why it is? Some quality of the mind, it must be."

AFTER HER FRESHMAN YEAR MEI-LING moved to the Wellesley campus and lived in Wood Cottage. With her move and the settling into her second year of work, a change seemed to come over her. Suddenly she appeared in the cottage living room clad in simple but beautiful Chinese dress. Above the high collar and the sculptured cut of the material, her face was Chinese in a way the girls had never seen it. Her great eyes beneath the even line of her heavy bangs, the pale ivory of her skin, the full contour of her lips were there before them, startling in their lines.

"Mei-ling!" several of them said at once.

"Why, you've gone Chinese!" said another.

"I like you better this way than in American clothes," said still another.

"Well, I am Chinese," Mei-ling said, suddenly laughing and falling into her old manner, "and I just felt I wanted to wear Chinese dress from now on, so if you don't mind—"

"Mind!" said the girl she had helped in philosophy, "you are lovelier than ever that way."

Mei-ling's thoughts were turning more and more toward China. And her mind seemed almost beyond her control in its activity. It rushed here and there, and

wrestled with problems another would have laid aside as too hard. She was likely to run into the study of the teacher who lived in Wood Cottage and ask the definition of literature or the definition of religion. She would argue about conventional standards which were ordinarily accepted and would not take them for herself until she had discovered the reasons for them.

"But that is not true," she would say if she found out that someone had put her off with a conventional idea. There was always a fire about her and a genuineness. Father Soong, reading her letters, which gave the details of her life, laughed and said, "She is exactly as she was—always wanting to say the whole truth boldly out and annoyed when Ai-ling told her it just wasn't done. Such a girl! She wanted to be a boy so she could do things. Well, it won't make any difference. She will do things.

"How different my three girls are! Ai-ling is a leader. She understands politics and is quick to grasp a hidden meaning—and beautiful besides—and Ching-ling is still the girl who does not show herself but whose heart will, I am afraid, be given to some sacrifice. She is too tender and too sensitive. And Mei-ling, with her fun and her brilliant ability! What will become of them all, these three of the Soong Six? T. V. will be back soon, and then in a little while T. A. and T. L. will go. Well, I could not do it if it were not for the printing house, the Commercial Press. I never dreamed so much could come of my plan to print Bibles. My children shall have the education they need."

But in America, putting on Chinese dress again had made Mei-ling a little more Chinese and so a little more alien. Her thoughts, too, were concerned more and more

with China. She gathered clippings which seemed important to her. She wrote long letters to T. V. and when sometimes he came to Wellesley, they pored over their accumulated information, withdrawn for a little while from American life.

Without thinking, Mei-ling one day hung on her wall for decoration an ancient Chinese scimitar. To her astonishment, one of the Freshmen passing her open door was frightened and broke into a run. Mei-ling could not keep from laughing and saying to herself, "Now she believes in the heathen Chinese for a surety!" Perhaps they all felt her more Chinese than they had before.

At any rate she began to find more Chinese friends than heretofore. In her letters home she wrote of Mr. Li and Mr. Wang and Mr. Peng, saying casually that some of the Chinese students from Harvard came sometimes with T. V., to see her. As a matter of fact, it was a common sight for some nice-looking Chinese boy to be on the doorstep of Wood Cottage. Mei-ling let them come but the thought uppermost in her mind was China—what to do when she got back and how to go about it. Walking through the moonlight of her Sophomore spring she talked to her companion of what was taking place in China rather than of the passing events of Harvard and Wellesley and since both of them were Chinese, they could not keep from being excited by the news from their own country.

When T. V. came, they read and reread letters from home. "But we have been away so long," Mei-ling would moan in desperation. "I was only a child and now I am a woman. How am I to find myself? I do not even know Chinese history and the old culture as you do, T. V., for

you had nearly all of high school there, while I had only elementary work.

"But the revolution does not seem to be going so very well, T. V. What do you make of it? Father speaks only casually of it, as if it would go on for years. Mother does not speak of it at all and Ai-ling tells a great deal of everything else and then suggests that Dr. Sun is not the kind of man to succeed in what he is trying to do now. He seems to be back and forth from Japan all the time. Ching-ling is the only one who says anything definite about the revolution—what the next step is to be and how people feel about it. She mentions this young military leader, Chiang Kai-shek. I thought Dr. Sun had begun to depend on him, but now it seems the man is in Shanghai working as an ordinary clerk. I can't make it out. I suppose the world war has something to do with it. It seems to affect everything. And I can't make out Ching-ling. Something is wrong, T. V. What is it?"

"I don't know, but she evidently planned to be in Shanghai only two or three months and now she has been there almost a year."

"She is unhappy, T. V. Something is troubling her. Do you think she wants to work with Dr. Sun and Mother won't let her? You know how she is."

"It may be, and yet, I am not sure but that if Ching-ling wanted to do a thing she would do it. I can't forget the few times she flew at me as a child. One does not get entirely over a temper like that."

"I suppose we just have to wait, but I would give ten years to be able to talk with Ching-ling."

XXVI

THE SUMMER AND AUTUMN OF 1914 HAD passed in Shanghai, the winter and spring of 1915 had come and gone, and summer drew near again. Ching-ling was still there, a Ching-ling outwardly the same but inwardly resolved after months of desperate indecision.

After the first weeks of being at home again had passed, Ching-ling had spoken. She was never, so long as she lived, to forget any detail of that scene. Only her mother and father were present, but she had felt it would be of no use to include Ai-ling. It was her mother and father to whom the words must be said.

They had been talking of Dr. Sun and the way in which things seemed to have come to a temporary stand-still. Ching-ling hesitated an instant, and then, with that whiteness of the face which always came to her with intense feeling, she said very clearly, "I have wanted for a very long time to tell you something, but I did not want to do anything to spoil the pleasure of our reunion. So I have waited. But now I must speak, for the time has gone quickly. It is the wish of Dr. Sun and myself to be married so that we may be together always. I can help him a great deal and my heart is in the revolution. He is a good man and a great man. I ask your consent. He will write as soon as he knows I have spoken."

"Ching-ling! You are mad—utterly mad! He is twice your age and a—a revolutionist! And he has been married! I shall never agree. Never! Besides—"

"Mother, now wait a little. Let us learn a little more about it. Ching-ling, was this agreed before you came away? You have had no other feeling since getting back? You have not enjoyed the work here? You are sure within yourself?" Father Soong was trying to understand.

"Yes, Father, I am sure. I have always wanted to serve the revolution. I know that now—and I was so happy in Japan. It was as though at last I had found everything, what I wanted to do, the man I could love and serve. I pray your consent, Mother and Father."

"It cannot be," Mother Soong said with a look of stern distaste on her face. "It cannot be. How could you even think of it! One of the Soongs! Come to your senses, Ching-ling. You would regret it bitterly. Besides,—we may as well speak, Charlie—you are engaged. We have arranged a marriage for you, your father and I. Now then, we have the facts before us and we may as well face them."

Ching-ling rose to her feet and stood before them. In the silence of the room, she seemed small and white and childish. For an instant she looked as though she might fall, then her voice, no louder than usual, but so distinct that every syllable stood out by itself, said with precision, "It is not an engagement of my making. Until you have my agreement, you have only one party to the engagement."

"You know it is the old custom for parents to arrange marriages for their children," Mother Soong said severely. "True, there are those who no longer follow it, but in

your case we thought it would help you since you are bashful and reticent. It would be a good marriage for you and an asset to the family. I can only hope you will have the common sense to think it over when we tell you all about it, and change your feeling. Education is all very well, but not when it brings lack of good taste and disrespect for the decisions of one's parents."

There was silence for a little. Father Soong shifted uncomfortably in his seat and started to say miserably, "Do sit down, Ching-ling," but before he had said it, the girl's voice came distinctly again without change of tone.

"I am sorry, Mother. I had no idea of this. It is strangely out of keeping with all my upbringing. I can only say, my mind is definitely made up." She bowed a little and turned and walked out of the room, almost before they knew it.

"She will get over it," Mother Soong said, seeing the tragedy in Father Soong's face. "It is only a girlish idea. She has just come home. We should never have let her stop in Japan. One never knows what is in her head. You have never been severe enough with her on this matter of Dr. Sun, letting her sit and listen to talk she should never have heard, and thus allowing her wild ideas to run on. We should have stopped it long ago. Imagine her marrying Dr. Sun! The whole thing is impossible."

But Charlie Soong was thinking. "Wait," was all he said. "Wait." He must have time to comprehend. His Ching-ling wanted to marry Dr. Sun and take a leading part in this revolution. So this was the sacrifice she would make! He could see it all so plainly now, the child remembering the man with the deep-sunk eyes and what he had said of China, the young girl who had been so moved

by what this man had said of giving himself to China that she who was usually silent had unpremeditatedly said, "So shall I," the woman who had written of and argued the cause of the people with her history professors in college and had come home to serve her country.

"It has been going on too long," the father groaned to himself. "If anything was to be done about it, it should have been done long ago. I've let it go on and aided and abetted it. As for this other engagement, everyone knows such things are broken nowadays. Mother just could not resist a good offer. I'll be half glad if that does not come off. The fellow is not her kind. Dr. Sun is her kind and, as Ching-ling said, he is good and great. It may not be so bad, only he must be all of twenty-six years older than she, he's ill, and in an uncertain position. It might have been very different!

"I must find Ching-ling and talk this over with her, but not until I am a little calmer myself. To think that this would happen to Ching-ling!" Charlie looked up and around the room. Mother Soong had left while he sat thinking. He could imagine Ching-ling coming up to him with a little smile as she so often had as a tiny child, her sweet, delicate face making sure of his welcome and her whole small self approaching with careful, gentle grace. She was not full of chatter like the other ones, but once he had taken her on his lap, she nestled back against him, content to sit so and twist one of the buttons on his jacket and perhaps at last make a little whispered confidence to the effect that she had that day found a certain flower open in the garden or that she had that morning been given a candy doll. That was little Ching-ling.

A great rush of feeling swept him and, unable to en-

sure it, he rose quickly and began to pace the room. She must not give herself in haste or for nothing. He would find her and ask but one thing—that she wait until none of them could doubt. When that time came she had his consent.

So Ching-ling stayed on in Shanghai, writing to Dr. Sun with the secret gaiety she could show only to him, "See what you have done by insisting that I speak to my parents before making a decision! But, as I said, it is only a form. The decision is made. I stay only because of my father. You know him and you know that since he asks it, I must wait. But it is hard, so very hard. And waiting does no good, as far as my mother's point of view is concerned. Whenever the matter is mentioned she says only, 'It cannot be. It cannot be. No one outside the family must ever know of this.' There is a deep conservative sense in her. She is so good, as you know, but she cannot understand breaking away from old ways.

"I long to be with you doing all the things I did before. Meantime you have other help—but save some things for me. It excites me to know when you are coming to China but it would accomplish nothing for you to come here. It is better to wait as we are. Ai-ling's attitude is exactly like Mother's attitude, as you may know. She is kind, but she is sure that I will get over it. In fact, I am more than a little convinced that this man to whom I am supposed to be engaged is partly of her choosing. I shall wait until I come to you, Tsung-li! People are beginning to call you that and I love it because it means you are of importance to them and they esteem you."

So Ching-ling waited in Shanghai, doing all the things that her mother and sister thought might divert her mind.

Father Soong was absorbed in the Commercial Press, which was printing more books than ever. Yes, all of the others were busy and content, but in Ching-ling's heart there was only one determination and one desire, and, seeing at last that things would not change, that her mother and Ai-ling would always be as they were and that her father had already in his heart consented, Ching-ling began to lay her plans.

XXVII

IN THE WINTER OF HER JUNIOR YEAR AT Wellesley, Mei-ling sent a telegram to T. V., saying, "Can you come this week-end? Important news from home."

Mei-ling went through the days before that week-end in a daze. Two or three times she took out Ching-ling's letter and read it in private, and then went on with what had to be done, asking herself over and over, "Is there anything that I can do? Is it best for me to try to do anything? Oh, if only T. V. were here now!"

The letter was in Ching-ling's usual clear style. "I am writing to you, Mei-ling, because you are so far away that it will take a long time for word to get to you, and because it will be harder for you to understand in your surroundings what I am doing. You know from other letters that I have wanted to go back to Japan long before this but that Mother and Father have opposed it, Mother because she objected to Dr. Sun, and Father because he wanted me to be deliberate and sure of myself. I have waited, Mei-ling, long enough to see that Mother will never change and that Father's heart has already consented if I am sure.

"Mei-ling, did you know that Mother and Father had arranged a marriage for me before I got back? Can you believe such a thing? I still wonder that it could be so.

Mother said that since I was always bashful and reticent, she thought it would be a help to me. Ai-ling says the man is splendid and promising. Father has said nothing of the matter. Mother of course gave it as another reason why I could not marry Dr. Sun. Oh, Mei-ling, it has been very hard to wait when there was so much I could have been doing, and to feel the opposition here at home! They have tried to divert me in every way, always in the kindest ways. But, Mei-ling, they do not understand this thing which is in me. They do not see that if I stayed here I would lose the whole meaning of my life, and the happiness of doing what I want to do. I think perhaps you and T. V. can understand better what I shall soon do. I pray you can. I know its seriousness, all that it means. I realize the shadow it may cast on the family. I have weighed and measured over and over and the conclusion is always the same—I shall go.

“Mei-ling, I shall always remember many of our times together. I think you know my heart a little better, perhaps, than Ai-ling. Things may never be the same toward me again with any of you. I cannot be sure. But still, I must go. My happiness, my only happiness, lies in joining Dr. Sun. Besides that, I can be of great use to him. I can lengthen his life by giving him the care he needs, and by helping him to make people everywhere, even in China, understand the revolution. Oh, Mei-ling, I have never been as happy as I was during those months in Japan. I could laugh and be myself. Perhaps I am not happy about things which make other people happy—I do not know—but I shall be happy now, doing what I have always wanted to do.

“Mei-ling, when you get this I shall be in Japan with

Dr. Sun. I am going quickly, secretly, and without warning—eloping, I suppose you might call it. Since my family will not consent, we shall be married in Japan very quietly. You will tell T. V. I do not know what the family



here in Shanghai will do. They may cable you—you may have it before you get this—but I think they will remain silent until they write. I do not expect forgiveness. I have waited for consent and have not had it. I can wait no

more, for now I see it is final. They will not change, nor will I. I shall write you later if you will receive it. Oh, Mei-ling, it is so hard to do it in this way, but I am sure."

Mei-ling's eyes were bright with tears when she and T. V. read it together that Saturday night.

"It is the thing we all saw coming but could not stop," he said slowly. "It is that thing which began when she first saw Dr. Sun. Look what I found at the station when I boarded the train!"

There it was in headlines, "Second Daughter of Old Shanghai Family Elopes to Japan to Marry Chinese Revolutionary Leader, Dr. Sun Yat-sen." There were more details, only partly correct.

"I knew before I got here what it was," T. V. said, laying the paper and letter down and beginning to pace the room. "But I still say we all saw it coming, all except perhaps Mother. Ai-ling probably would not have believed that Ching-ling had the daring. Father may have questioned it on the same grounds, even though he has been much more lenient in the matter than the other two. It gives the family a curious reputation. I can see some of them writhing under that. There is nothing we can do, absolutely nothing. It may be she will repent still and come back. It may be Dr. Sun is not destined to live long. Probably her passion for the revolution will pass with him. After all, she is young. Well, I think we ought not to say we are glad when we are not, but still we can be pleasant, and let her feel we are as we always were as far as she is concerned."

"And yet," Mei-ling broke in, "you were saying when you started that we had all seen it coming. It did begin years ago when Ching-ling was a child. But Ching-

ling running off to Japan to get married! I can't get over it. Either Ai-ling or I would have been more likely to do it than she. And both Mother and Ai-ling against it! I can't help thinking of Ching-ling's face. You know how it is, so gentle and pretty, and her voice as soft as wind in the leaves on a summer's day. Oh, T. V., the whole thing is impossible!"

"But Mei-ling, I have seen Ching-ling's face white and her eyes like fire. You have seen her so, too. Her voice would be the same, no higher, no more strong, but every word so clear."

"She had been thinking of it for a long time," said Mei-ling thoughtfully. "It was not a hasty idea."

"It is perhaps the breaking through of something beyond even her own control," said T. V. slowly, folding the letter. "However it is, I am absolutely sure there is nothing to be done."

XXVIII

“**O**NE MORE YEAR AND I SHALL BE GOING back to China,” Mei-ling said half gladly, half sadly the last week of her Junior year. “I have been gone so long that I shan’t know where to begin. Yet I can scarcely wait to go because there is so much to do.”

It was a June evening and the moonlight shone down whitely, patterning the lacy leaves of the trees on the broad smooth walk. In the distance could be heard voices and laughter and lilting music. For a moment, Mei-ling let herself be carried away, then drew herself sharply back to reality.

“I shall first have to—”

“Mei-ling!” Peter Li said urgently, stopping in their pacing and turning so as to face her. “Mei-ling,” he said again more softly, “I beg you again—say you will marry me! We are both Chinese, both of Kiangsu province, both of families of the same sort, both going back next year. Oh, Mei-ling, I can think of nothing else, I can never care for anyone else. I have asked you again and again, I ask you now, I beg you, I plead with you—Mei-ling, please marry me!”

“Oh, Peter, don’t! I don’t want to marry yet. I don’t even want to be engaged! It is much the best to leave it until later.”

"But, Mei-ling, if you love me, why can't you let me have this to look forward to? Surely we are modern Chinese? We do not have to depend upon our parents and upon middlemen for our marriage arrangements. If you care enough, Mei-ling, then it is our affair to settle."

"Let's walk again," Mei-ling said suddenly. "I must think."

Something cold was gripping at her heart. Peter had said they were modern and able to make their own marriage arrangements, but could she be sure of it? There had rushed into the forefront of her mind something which she had pushed back out of the way because of a pressure of other things. Her parents, her own parents had arranged a marriage for Ching-ling. Ai-ling, her own sister, back in the old environment, had helped to choose a man.

She stumbled a little in her walking and Peter caught her hand. A warmth rushed over her. Here was Peter, dear, good, lovable, impetuous Peter. True, she had grown a little weary of repeated urgings, but here he was, educated in America, handsome, wealthy. She ought to be thankful that she had thought of it in time. She would manage her own affairs.

"I suppose that since we feel the way we do," she said, slowly coming to a halt, "it would be wiser simply to engage ourselves to each other. Of course I don't want to be married for a long—"

"Mei-ling, you will—you will?" Peter stooped and looked closely into her face as if to make sure of what she meant, and then drew her with a trembling hand until his lips could touch her lightly on the forehead, then the cheek.

"Well, you are modern," Mei-ling said, laughing a little in excitement at what she had done and stepping out of his reach. "Since we aren't to be married for so long, don't you think it would be just as well not to do things like that?"

"But you love me, Mei-ling, or you wouldn't promise!"

"Of course—I said so. Now it's settled. I shall write to my parents and you write to yours and then it will be known that Peter Li and Mei-ling Soong are engaged to be married. But now let's forget about it and walk on as we were, and talk of what we shall do when we get back."

"But, Mei-ling, it's very hard to be so matter of fact about a thing like this. I—I feel all torn up inside. I've asked you so many times and today I thought the answer was going to be just the same as before, but now— Oh, Mei-ling, let's sit down quietly somewhere and talk of the things we will do together when we are married. I can't just put it out of my mind right away. After all, we are engaged, aren't we? Come on! Here is a good seat. See how the moonlight plays all around but leaves this spot in darkness? It is just the place for us."

"Well, if you wish—a little while. But it is so long until the wedding—"

Peter saw that Mei-ling was comfortably settled on the grassy bank, then threw himself down beside her and took one of her hands between his.

"Look," he said, "the shadows over there make one almost think he is looking at an old Chinese pagoda standing against the night sky, and the rustling of the leaves is almost like the lapping of water, so that I could

imagine myself in Hangchow, on the shore of West Lake. We shall be there sometime, Mei-ling."

"Yes, Peter," the girl said slowly, but she was thinking not of being anywhere with Peter Li, but of being in China herself and of doing the many things she had been



planning to do ever since she was a little girl. A protest rose in her as she sat there and she all but drew her hand away.

"He would like me to adore him and bear him a family of children and be a good wifely wife." she said in scorn

to herself, "but I want none of that. I'm going to do things and nothing shall stand in my way."

With her free hand she brushed back her bangs in an impatient way that she had, and stirred uneasily where she sat. It was hard to sit patiently here with Peter when her whole being was straining to be up and at something.

"I'll have to go. I've forgotten something," she said on a sudden impulse.

They rose hastily. She simply couldn't go on sitting there. Peter was all right, sweet and all that, but now she had to think.

At the door, Peter bowed and said huskily, "I hope you get it done all right—that we haven't delayed too much."

"Oh yes, it will be all right," Mei-ling said brightly, forgetting for an instant why she had come back. "You will be writing soon, won't you?"

"And you?"

"Oh, right away!"

"Good night!"

"Good night!"

Mei-ling paused just inside her door. "I'm engaged to be married," she said slowly as if realizing it for the first time. "But I shan't marry Peter or anyone for years and years. All of everything lies before me. I'm alive and well, and next year I graduate from Wellesley College! Then—what a long time it has been!—then I shall go back home. That is all I care about," she finished, walking to an open window and looking out into the dark.

Far down the driveway she could hear the crunch of Peter's retreating heels.



XXIX

“**A** YEAR AGO TODAY WE WERE MARRIED,” said Ching-ling, looking up from her work and letting her eyes rest on Dr. Sun. It was the year of the Russian revolution.

“A year ago, Ching-ling. What a blessed thing it has been for me. Ah, I am too weary to think sometimes. If it were not for you!”

“Don’t be foolish,” Ching-ling said quickly, smiling. “I am only a pen in your hands. Now isn’t it so? But a very willing pen—and I have brought you a little peace, Tsung-li, a little quiet which you might not have had?”

“I would have been dead with the endless interviews, the intrigue, the problems too great for any mortal, Ching-ling. But do you ever in your secret heart regret? Is it too hard that your family never openly forgives? Tell me truly, Ching-ling, for this I cannot add to myself—the burden of knowing that in any secret way you are unhappy.”

“Look at me!” Ching-ling said, rising quickly and running to him. “Do I look unhappy? Am I hiding a secret grief? Look into my eyes, Tsung-li! You can see that I am telling the truth. It has been the happiest year of my life. Now let’s never think of this again. Tell me a little more of the situation in Russia. Do you know more

than you said last night?" Ching-ling settled herself beside him and he began to tell her of the outbreak in Russia.

"Ching-ling, in Russia there is the beginning of something of which no one can prophesy the end. It may teach the Chinese common people to take a step forward to govern themselves, too." Dr. Sun's voice trembled a little with excitement and weariness. "But the hardest of all for me is the war between the Chinese war lords and the ambitious men who want all the power for themselves. Oh, Ching-ling, I can see the vision of what ought to come for our country, but it is bitter to have to reach it so slowly. I must find that man Chiang Kai-shek again. Times have been hard for all of us—the war in Europe, uncertain finances, jealousies and fears and suspicions everywhere—but if ever the revolution is to succeed, I must have a man like Chiang. . . . There is someone at the door, Ching-ling. Perhaps I should—"

"No," Ching-ling was already saying to the messenger who stood there. "He will see no one today. Tell your master he will have to await Dr. Sun's convenience." There was a strange firmness in Ching-ling's mild voice and the messenger bowed and went away, having had experience with Madame Sun before.

She pulled the shades where Dr. Sun stretched himself on a narrow couch, covered him with a warm blanket, and saw to it that the open-faced stove was burning brightly. Then she settled herself to her writing at the far end of the room where the gray light of a winter day shone in.

Before she began to write she paused to let the quietness fall over them. In appearance she was a little more mature than she had been a year before, yet her face

still held its delicate, flower-like sweetness. She might have been a schoolgirl sitting at her lessons, were it not for the look in her eyes, a look of determination for all its tender thoughtfulness.

On this anniversary of her wedding, Ching-ling let her mind flash back over the year. For a moment she lived again the day when she had written Mei-ling, the day when alone and secretly she had boarded a ship for Japan, second class, clad in cotton like any simple Chinese girl, and the day she had pledged herself to Dr. Sun. None of it mattered now except the fact that she was with him.

During the year, she had seen Dr. Sun's son, Sun Fo, a promising man of about her own age. Instantly understanding had flashed between them. "No one could have done so important a thing to help our revolutionary cause," he said, looking at her with appreciative eyes. "Few people understand my father's heart."

She was Madame Sun, now, and she was both happy and excited. She was doing what she had always wanted to do, and now things were beginning. She would guard and care for Tsung-li. Nothing could happen to him. He was her own, her precious charge, and she believed that in him lay the hope of China. No one could do what he could. She remembered words which Ai-ling had written her months before in that first pained letter after Ching-ling had left Shanghai. "Most of all, who knows the outcome of this thing? You are guiding your course by an unknown star, a comet which flashes through the sky and then is gone. Who knows what Dr. Sun is after? Does he know himself? He is a dreamer, and dreams do not produce real things but only passing fancies."

No, Ai-ling could not see it, nor her mother, and her

father only enough to be sympathetic but not to believe much in it. Mei-ling had written in her old passionate way. "But couldn't you have worked for Dr. Sun without marrying him? He is old and sick and no one knows where this thing is coming out. Surely you need not have gone so far. I can't imagine you as Madame Sun. You will always be just Ching-ling to me. Of course we all forgive you. We are all of the Soong family and so we stand together. But I wish you had not tied yourself to two uncertainties. Remember how we used to talk of all the things we wanted to do when we got back?

"And now I feel a separation slipping in, something which neither of us wants. Oh, Ching-ling, let's not let it happen! Of course now you are married, that can't be changed, but let's plan to be together. I'm going to have a good time when I get back, and do all the things I've wanted to do. I suppose we are all doing what we want to do, perhaps. I don't know—at least each of us has chosen and I suppose we were free to choose. But before I forget, Ching-ling, if you hear anything about my engagement to Peter Li, don't be upset. It will be a long time before anything happens, and I don't know exactly why I did it. But I do know that I am going to do all the things that I have wanted to do so long."

She thought of them as she sat there in the quiet of the room where Dr. Sun lay, his eyes closed, but not sleeping. She loved them all, but what she had done she had had to do.

XXX

IN JUNE OF THAT SAME YEAR, 1917, MEI-LING graduated from Wellesley. She was named a Durant scholar, the highest academic honor offered by the college. She was a member of the Tau Zeta Epsilon sorority which was devoted to music and art. But to her father she wrote simply, "It is only accomplishing what I set out to do, and since I knew I could when I made it my aim, there is no glory to it. I should have been a lazy person to have done less."

Still she was proud and happy to have reached the goal she had set herself. In her many things were mingled, the zeal of her mother, the daring of her father, the puritanism of their conservative Christian home and her own flashing independence trained under the best of American teaching. Above all she had her able mind, which would be bound by nothing and which made her love and hate and laugh and weep even while it held her strongly under its control. For, as in her sisters, determination was strong in Mei-ling. What she set out to do, she did, and she had set out to do many things. One of these, which she had not at all forgotten, was to have a good time, and with this in mind she set sail for China, a girl of barely twenty-one.

Back in Shanghai, she ran to each of the family in turn, unable to contain herself. "You are the same," Ai-ling said delightedly, holding her off at arm's length. "All you need to do to make the past come back is to say something not ordinarily said so that I can scold you!"

Then Ai-ling added, laughing, "Oh, Mei-ling, remember what you said the day we left Shanghai as children, 'We won't be seeing you until we are grown up'? So much has happened! Look, here is David now, a great big boy in pants, ready for school in two more years!"

Later, when they were alone, Ai-ling said in a troubled way, "Of course it is Ching-ling we are thinking of all the time. How could she? I ask myself over and over—Ching-ling, of all people! We have all written, of course, but how can we be the same? She has gone against all our feelings. She has brought publicity on the Soong name. We never know where she is, running here and there after Dr. Sun, her name and picture always with his. Of course that is to be expected of his wife—but our Ching-ling! It has aged Mother, Mei-ling. You don't notice it because it is so long since you have seen her anyway, but I do, though she says nothing now except the most kindly things and no one outside the family has ever known but that we considered it the highest honor to be so linked with Dr. Sun. Ching-ling might have done so differently.

"Mei-ling, tell me, who is this Peter Li? What is it all about? I can't feel, I haven't from the first, that your heart was in it. Tell me, was it because you were afraid something might be arranged here for you? Was that it, Mei-ling?"

"Oh, Peter is nice, and all that," said Mei-ling laughing without much merriment and looking at herself in a long mirror, "but of course that was it. I hadn't the slightest idea of such a thing until I suddenly remembered Ching-ling. I was so far away, things might seem very different here. I could not take the chance. What did Mother and Father say?" Mei-ling's face was very serious, and unhappy lines stood out around her mouth. She often felt sorry about Peter.

"They didn't comment on it at first, and then Father simply said, 'Since nothing is to come of it for a long time, we can wait until she returns.' Mother did not reply for a while until at last she said very thoughtfully, 'The Li family is a good family but not Christian.' But, Mei-ling, nothing will come of it?"

"No," said Mei-ling. "Now I see it was a silly thing to do and I shall never be able to make everything right with Peter. One gets confused by the strange things which happen, most of all this which has happened to Ching-ling. But, Ai-ling, if she is happy so—and you know how she always was—shouldn't we be glad for her sake? There was always something about her that made us wonder—you know how it was—and now she seems so different—so happy, alive, content."

"I think Dr. Sun should never have been in our home as he was," said Ai-ling almost bitterly. "It was with his visits that it all started. Things have to be controlled. They cannot be allowed to take their course, but Father is always quick to accept a stranger and Mother has always been busy, and so it happened. Mother is busier than ever now with the church which she is building and the orphanage she supports. I look at her and marvel at

all she does. Outwardly she has aged, but inwardly she is as young as ever, as full of hope and plans."

"And you are just like her," said Mei-ling, laughing and throwing her arm around her sister in her old, impulsive way. "I've heard of all sorts of things that you are doing—Madame Kung leading in this and leading in that—Madame Kung—Madame Kung—Madame Kung! You are an important person, Ai-ling, and you will be more and more so, I know. You are made that way, you and your husband and your son. Oh, your lovely, charming home!" Mei-ling broke off, looking around the great room where they sat. "It is just like you, Ai-ling, graceful and dignified and beautiful. And here important people meet, isn't it so?"

"You make me feel very silly, Mei-ling, with your talking, but it is so good to have you back with all your impulsive words. And now the next thing is for you to become a belle of Shanghai, isn't it?"

They fell to laughing then, with their arms around each other so that little David, peeping shyly in, stood with his finger at his mouth while the great tears welled to his eyes. "I don't like you to cry like that," he sobbed at last, completely mystified.

When they had reassured him and he sat solemnly on his mother's lap, she began to plan with Mei-ling. "I'm going to have a reception for you, first of all, and then there are several things that you can begin to do at once."

"And I must study Chinese," Mei-ling broke in, her eyes shining. Oh, she was beginning to do all she had wanted to do.

A few weeks later she wrote to friends in America, "I am studying with an old-fashioned classical Chinese

teacher. He reads a phrase and I repeat it after him, giving the same sing-song intonation, the same regard to tone, the same rhythmic, swaying motion of the body. I am going back to things I missed as a child, learning my Mother Goose and my Æsop's Fables, and much more. I want all the feeling of Old China, for I can't understand the new if I haven't known the old. And it's fun and comes quickly to me."

Everything came quickly to Mei-ling. Flashing in and out of colorful Shanghai groups, her keen mind and telling wit won her a place everywhere. Her name was suggested for this and for that and slowly but surely she was becoming the very thing about which she had joked so much, a belle of Shanghai.

No one could resist her. Her great eyes sparkled and her mind reached out and grasped an idea while it was scarcely formed. Unwilling to wait for anything, she threw herself first into social work. She was the first woman ever appointed to the Child Labor Commission, which undertook to investigate labor conditions in the industries carried on in the foreign settlement in Shanghai. She was secretary of the joint committee of the American, British, and Chinese Women's Clubs formed in 1921 for the study of factory conditions in China. Then in a little while she was a member of the National Film Censoring Commission, was taking part in an organization for returned students, and was working in the Y.W.C.A. From the moment of her return, the blood of old Charlie Soong seemed to sing in her veins. She would change China! She would change China!

And old Charlie watched her with glowing eyes. When he could have a moment with her he drew her aside and

said, "What do you think of my printing house, the Press, Mei-ling? When I used to dream about it, I never dared let even my dreams go this far. Now the great, new buildings are actually going up. We have more contracts for publications—greater ones than any of us could imagine. Ha, the Commercial Press of Shanghai! I will be a rich man before I die, Mei-ling, that is, unless I die too soon. Strange, I used to peddle hammocks throughout the country-side of Georgia, and my schooling was given to me, and now others peddle my books and I become a rich man. Strange how things work out—our books going out to all of China. Well, well, you must be going and I must be going. One can't stop to play too long in China these days."



XXXI

IT WAS A STRANGE UNBALANCED TIME, THAT winter of 1920 and 1921. The war was still on in Europe. Money was made or lost in a night. Chiang Kai-shek, after uncertain years in Shanghai, tried his success as an exchange broker and was rich in a few months. But then the crash came in 1920 and he was short thirty thousand dollars with no prospects anywhere. An old friend paid his debts and sent him south to Dr. Sun who was then in Canton.

"The man Chiang is on hand again," Dr. Sun said to Ching-ling. "It is well. I shall send him to Moscow to study for a year as my protégé. We shall have more and more need of this man and he can learn much from the Russians."

Dr. Sun was looking increasingly towards Moscow for ideas and, he hoped, for real support. All that he wanted for his own people he thought was being done for the people of Russia. "They are having the experience," he often said to Ching-ling with a deep sense of confidence.

In 1922 the Russian Soviet was established and Dr. Sun began to think of Russian advisers for the establishment of the new Chinese state. Many Chinese upon whom he had depended had failed him. They were jealous of one another, or they wanted money and power. The

sudden change to democracy had not developed as he had hoped after the Manchu empire was overthrown, and for him and for Ching-ling the heart of the whole revolution was now the dream of educating the farmers and working people everywhere. Surely none could advise them better than men from the new peasant Russia, they thought, as they tried to see the way ahead.

But Ching-ling felt some deep-seated trouble even before her husband did. In the quiet of the night, which



was often the only time they could speak with no one else near to listen, she said, hesitating partly because she was not sure she was right and partly because she did not want to hurt Dr. Sun, "People begin to suspect that the revolution is a Communist affair, Tsung-li. Some even say that we are borrowing a Russian idea and are being too greatly swayed by these Russian advisers. What should we do, Tsung-li?" Then after a while, disturbed by her thoughts, she whispered to the man beside her,

"Those we counted on to help us still cannot forget themselves and remember the others. They have not had the experience of poverty, and so they must turn even the revolution to their own ends."

"Wait, now," Dr. Sun said patiently. "There must be some way. If we are taking too extreme an attitude, perhaps we can do something by compromise. Any who have heard me talk know that it is not my idea to set up a Chinese Soviet. I am not ready to go that far. But somehow the common people must be more free and more happy. Our government must give them that freedom somehow, if not by one step, then by two."

"But they are saying that we have two parties now in the government—the Kuomintang or Nationalists and the Reds or Communists. And the Nationalists are against us. They will openly attack us as Communists. It is *true*, Tsung-li! I have heard it from people who know what they say."

"Then we shall try to draw them together by compromise. If only we could have a little peace from civil strife! If only this body of mine were not so worthless!"

"We shall go to Peking soon and see what the doctors there say," said Ching-ling in a soothing voice, even while her heart was sick with terror. Always this frailty and this weakness! It was some trouble with the stomach which kept Dr. Sun rarely able to do a full day's work. He was an ~~aging~~ man, full of tenderness and dreams and hope which he could not carry out.

But he had forgotten himself again and was saying in his meditative way, "Thank God, Chiang is back and turning out real soldiers from his Whampoa Academy. It is not as though we had no one on whom to lean. Let

these war lords fight. We have a good man to deal with them. He can fight, too."

But Dr. Sun grew worse as the days passed. Ching-ling prepared foods which he could take and she tried to ease his burdened mind. But he was no better. "Have you pain?" she would ask and when he would not tell her, she said at once, "We shall have another doctor, or we shall go to Peking."

Then he would say with his old, faint smile, "Oh, it is nothing—only weariness, perhaps. I want no food, I want only the success of the revolution. Now let us turn again to that letter at which we were working."

In 1925 Ching-ling and Dr. Sun were in Peking. She was always at the hospital where he lay.

"We should have come sooner," she kept saying in bitter remorse. "The best doctors in China are here."

Then in the quiet of the dreadful nights she again lived through those nine years of her life with Dr. Sun. Only nine years—and he was ill to death in Peking!

The Chinese revolution was at its height. The compromise which Dr. Sun had carried out only partially succeeded in drawing together the two diverse groups: those who, like the rest of the Soong family, wished more gradual change and those like himself who believed in more complete reorganization at once of China's government. Who could tell which way things might turn? If anything happened to him, who was there to champion the cause of the people?

Agony swept over Ching-ling during the days in Peking, but outwardly she was serene, controlled, master of the situation. Deep in her mind was the thought, "I gave myself to Dr. Sun and to the revolution, to serve

them both. If one must be taken from me, the other remains," yet even as she thought it, her lips were saying silently, "Oh, Tsung-li, Tsung-li, this cannot happen to us!"

But Dr. Sun was dying. No one could do more. The last consultation had been held, the last remedy administered. It was cancer, gone too far. Ching-ling was admitted to sit beside the bed. "He is conscious," the doctor said quietly, "but we have tried to ease the pain. You will not excite him?"

Ching-ling shook her head faintly, her face a mask of pallor but her eyes dry. She sat and watched through the early morning and on until almost noon. Once Dr. Sun's eyes rested on her face in question and she said in her natural voice, "I am here with you, Tsung-li. Everything that can be done is done. Is there anything you want me to do?"

He closed his eyes, and shook his head a little, and a faint smile hung on his lips for an instant. But his eyes sought her face again in a little while and rested there—the deep, soft, kindly eyes of the man who had dreamed dreams for China.

He died so, going so quietly that Ching-ling scarcely knew it when the eyes became fixed in their steady gaze, and the fluttering breath stopped. It was a strange, quiet hour, as though all the hospital, the waiting nurse and doctor, China, even the revolution, were remote. There were just the two of them looking into each other's eyes, re-living their years together, sharing again the dreams and ecstasies of their hearts, and pledging themselves again to their ideal of the Chinese revolution. Not even the desperation of loss and sadness came to Ching-ling

while the mood lasted. But in a moment the doctor had slipped forward with his stethoscope and said quietly, "He is dead."

Then Ching-ling left quickly and as she stepped out into the bright noon sunshine, suddenly she was aware. Tsung-li was gone! She was alone. Not even her family stood with her. Small and white and controlled, she stepped into a carriage which waited with officials who escorted her, but she said nothing. The great tree had been stricken down, but she, a small, yielding sapling, was left. The body was gone and she, a severed hand, was there. But there was his work, and it must go on. In her heart she said clearly and firmly, "The revolution is going on and I am still here."

XXXII

“SUN YAT-SEN IS DEAD! SUN YAT-SEN IS dead!” The word ran wildly through China. Peasants, who before had heard only vaguely that a certain man had hoped to bring them a new freedom but who had never put great stock in it because life had never been so for peasants, were belatedly stirred by the thought that there might after all have been some hope for them in him—and now he was dead. Workers toiling long hours in factories and meeting secretly for their labor organizations, looked at each other with fresh consternation, for they had put all their faith in this man, and now the man was dead. Students stood in knots arguing the strong and weak points of this man who had been leading the Chinese revolution.

Everywhere the word that he was dead seemed to clear away uncertainties and doubts which had clouded his figure while he was alive. Where before, many more thoughtful ones had said, “He is a dreamer and can come to nothing.” . . . “He is a Communist and if he succeeds it will mean social upheaval.” . . . “He has no military power and when has a man who cannot command armies succeeded?”—now suddenly these same people were remembering that he was the first president of the Chinese Republic at its beginning in 1912, that he had tried to do

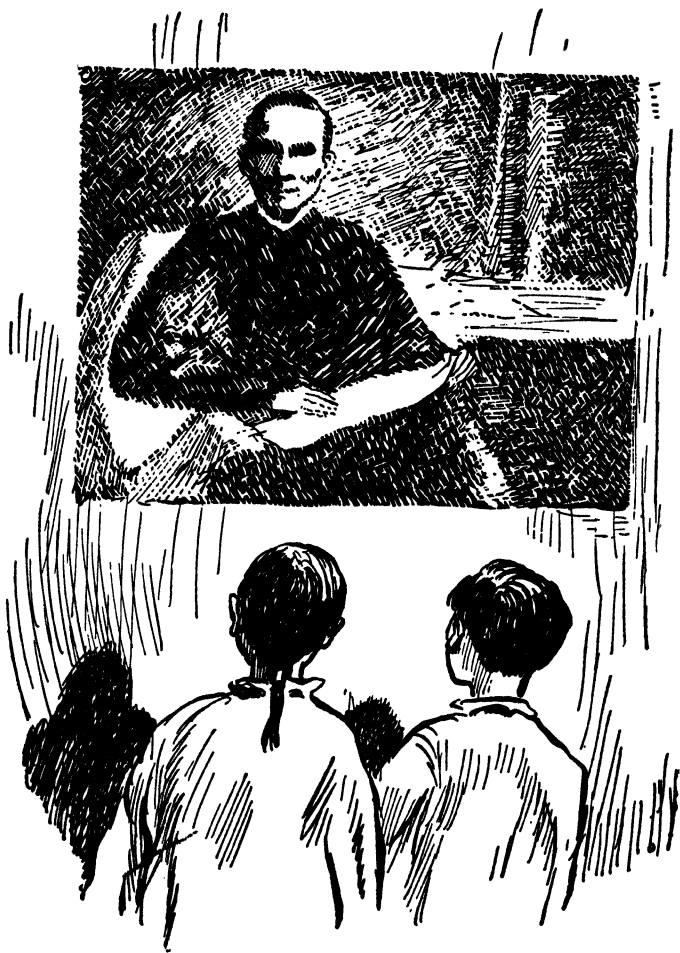
more for the betterment of the people than any man before him, and that personally, he was a mild, kindly, good man.

Sun Yat-sen became a hero, almost a divinity, over night. Copies of his picture appeared even in village schoolrooms. Children pointed to it and whispered in awed tones, "Dr. Sun Yat-sen, the father of New China!" Copies of his last will and testament, written in Ching-ling's clear hand with only his rough signature, were hung in every schoolroom and public meeting place and at the weekly memorial services of each school were read with bowed heads and hushed voices.

"For forty years I have devoted myself to the cause of the people's revolution with but one end in view, the elevation of China to a position of freedom and equality among the nations. . . . To attain this goal we must bring about a thorough awakening of our own people. . . . The work of the revolution is not yet done. Let our comrades all follow my 'Plans for National Reconstruction.' . . . This is my heartfelt charge to you. . . ."

Many a young girl, only half comprehending the words, looked at the picture while her lips moved, and wept quietly for this man who had done something so great for China, and now was dead.

Even Mother Soong in her Shanghai home, busy with all her many works of social reform, paused and listened to the murmurs and the tears of the Chinese people and said suddenly to Charlie standing stunned beside her, "Our Ching-ling will become famous as the widow of this man. Alive he was only useless and dangerous—but dead he serves a purpose." But Charlie said nothing, feeling nothing but the vast emptiness of his daughter's heart.



And Ai-ling, in her rushing about, planning and contriving to do all the things which she must do to help one person to succeed and another to fail, sat, suddenly pale, until her thoughts had clarified and she saw that from the tragedy came release and an opportunity for a better life for Ching-ling. "Everything works out," she said that night to H. H. "It will be hard now, but it will be best in the end—and hear what the people are saying! She can outstep us all if she has her wits about her!"

Mei-ling came to her father that night, and in the quiet of the evening said without her usual gaiety, "She knew it would come sometime. She married him knowing it could not be for long. But it has been worth it to her. And now she has the memory and his unfinished work left."

Charlie looked a long time at this daughter of his sitting there before him, slender and vivacious and able. Her face was in repose now, her great eyes dull with sadness. She could be so many things, gay, grasping, cunning, even while she was sad and generous and as naïve as a child. In his Mei-ling everything seemed mingled, though it was rare to see her in a mood like this.

"No one can completely know the heart of another," he said at last, "nor can one tell what life will make of us, but I am glad, Mei-ling, that Ching-ling did as she did. She has something which nothing can ever take away."

And Ching-ling herself fought quietly to hold down the publicity which began to surround Dr. Sun's death. The Russian advisers, who had hovered around him these last years, insisted that he must have a funeral such as was given Lenin, the Russian leader. Ching-ling said firmly, "He was always a Christian and hated display.

I am sure it would not be his wish. A quiet funeral is much more in keeping. Let it be so."

The quiet Christian funeral was held and then the Russians held an additional affair of vast pomp and masses of Communist insignia. Ching-ling stood by, silent, unhappy, until at last the tired body was carried to its temporary resting place in a temple on the Western Hills outside of Peking.

Then letters and telegrams began to bombard her. Mother Soong wired repeatedly that now her place was at home, all awaited her, the people would not understand if she remained away, some of them would come to bring her, if only she would come. Ai-ling wrote and plead, Mei-ling besought her, and T. V. came for her. But she remained. She did not try to do more than thank them and say again that her chief concern must from henceforth be the work for which she and her husband had striven together. But deep in her heart was the agony which was there because she knew that within her own family lay the roots of that division which must come—the division and the opposition which would try to stifle and to kill the very thing for which Dr. Sun had lived.

The words of the people coming to her made her pause and wonder and then say sadly, "They loved him—and who indeed could fail to!" But the acclaim which came to her and would have carried her on its crest, was beneath her notice. Mother Soong with a gleam in her eye said again and again, "But it is senseless for her to throw her chance away! Out of all this there has come influence for her if she will use it. She cannot throw it away and shame us all again!" Yet Ching-ling did not notice or come.

She might have been without effort China's most famous, most adored woman. She might have been more popular than Dr. Sun had ever been because his death had so greatly increased popularity for them both. But she would have none of it. She put letters and telegrams aside, noticing them if at all only in a vague, distracted way. Hearing fragments of Dr. Sun's sayings often repeated, she said sadly, "They repeat what he said, but they do not comprehend, and even if they could, there are those who twist and change the meaning to something that he never intended." She began to be afraid that all for which he had worked would be lost. But outwardly she never wavered.

For nothing could change her. She was still the quiet, sensitive child who had stood listening to her elders' talk and had pledged herself then to China. She was the child, too, who had endured beyond the patience of others, then to fly out with a terrific and unforgetting anger when the limit of reason was passed. And she was the girl who had defied everyone to marry the man she had chosen. No one could fathom her. Her small, quiet presence, her soft, unimpressive voice, her deep, mild eyes, all denied the measure and strength and greatness of the widow of Dr. Sun.



XXXIII

A YEAR AFTER DR. SUN'S DEATH, THE MAN Chiang Kai-shek had his armies moving rapidly northward from Canton, intent on reaching Nanking, Hankow, Peking. It was obvious that he must do all in his power to get the widow of Dr. Sun, the too-liberal revolutionary leader, to see the necessity of consenting to the advance as it was now to be conducted.

It was while he was trying to persuade Ching-ling of the wisdom of his plan that Mei-ling came to know him. She watched him, saying at first, "He does not know Ching-ling." And then a little later, "This man—this

man! What is there about him? But if he thinks to persuade Ching-ling—not even he can do that. She will never, never change.”

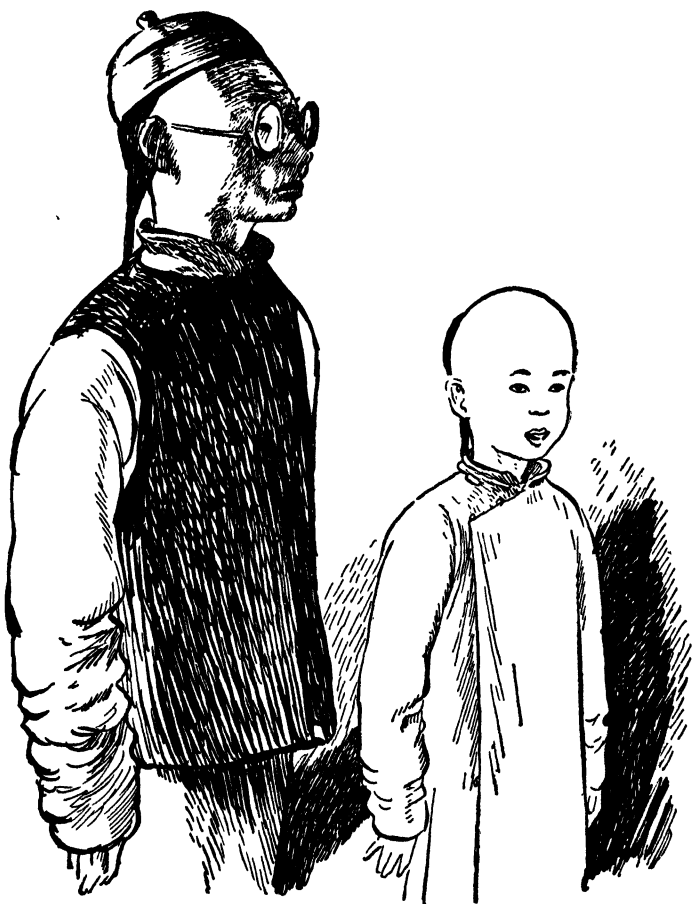
“She will never change,” she said directly to Chiang Kai-shek.

Chiang had always been a heroic figure even before he began to succeed, and he appealed to Mei-ling because he was heroic. Besides, she was not slow to see several things. In the first place, the revolutionary cause had been a failure until Dr. Sun had let Chiang take it over. Chiang was the first man who had been able to make it progress. In the second place, Mei-ling knew with the same intuition which led her oldest sister, Madame Kung, to a similar conclusion, that Chiang was a man sure to become great.

“He will succeed in what he undertakes,” Mei-ling said, talking with amazing candor at Shanghai teas and dinners, when the conversation turned to the leader of the military advance. Her dark eyes shone with liveliness and interest. To herself, quietly, she thought again and again, “He will succeed. It is in him and he cannot control it.”

Yet, thinking of this man and asking of him from those who knew, Mei-ling seemed to find little reason for her belief in him. She learned that he had been born in the little village of Chikow in Chekiang province in the year 1887, that he was the second son of a moderately poor family, and that his father had died when he was nine. Even though his mother was so poor that she had to work at the cross-stitch for which the province is famous, the boy, then called by his child name of Ju-tai, was sent to the village school. But he showed no interest in his les-

sons until he went to school in the city of Fenghua. There he was apprenticed then in the shop of relatives and, hating it, ran away to become a soldier. His mother, feel-



ing the Chinese sense of disgrace at having a member of the family in the army, remonstrated with him but still remained loyal to him.

"He says his mother helped him to success," Mei-ling

heard, "a good, plain woman of determination, who saw his ability."

"And then," her next informer, a young military officer, told her, "the military school in Paotingfu was started because certain men began to feel that China could never maintain her position unless she had military strength. Chiang, who now felt he was grown up and had changed his name to Kai-shek, meaning 'as clean as a stone,' went there to school. But his mother, wanting to do her full duty by him in her own way, had him married to a Miss Mao from Fenghua, whom he did not see until the day her red-curtained wedding chair was set down at his door. A son had been born, too, before he went away, yet his heart was not in these things but in the schooling which lay ahead. He was full of ambition and had begun to show ability."

"And then he went to Japan where he met Dr. Sun?" Mei-ling asked, her face masked to cover all feeling.

"He was there four years and during that time he met Dr. Sun."

"Who paid his way?"

"The Paotingfu school and his mother. He has never forgotten her and as success has come he has sent her money—her and his wife, whom he has not seen for years."

"But all the mother's work was repaid because he began to succeed," Mei-ling said with a flash in her eye.

"Yes. He began to succeed, with many difficulties but still to succeed. He established the Whampoa Academy, reorganized the army, and now he leads the advance. Everything depends upon him. The others are figure-heads."

"But his name is not even in the 'Who's Who' for last year," said Mei-ling doubtfully.

"But I'll warrant it will be next year," the young fellow said, throwing one leg over the other with a cocksure air of enthusiasm.

So Mei-ling began to watch this man out of the corner of her eye, saying nothing more and asking no further questions.

The movement of the Nationalist troops, as those fighting for a new, democratic China were called, went on. Chiang was alarmed to find that Hankow was seething in a ferment of feeling which was in favor of government by the workers and peasants. There was a freak incident in Nanking when troops seemingly out of control, attacked foreigners of all other nationalities. Then Chiang suddenly made his position clear by denouncing the Communists, sending the Russian advisers home, and bidding for the help of the Shanghai financiers.

Ching-ling, hearing of this alliance with Shanghai, cried out to sympathetic ones around her, "He is not strong enough! He is afraid to change things! He wants power and the confidence of those who can wield it. In his hands everything is lost!"

Thus it was that the clear-cut severance of the Nationalist and Communist influences began. The Russian advisers were on their way home, but centering around the small figure of Ching-ling were others whose influence no one could calculate. If only she could be won to the Nationalist cause! Chiang thought long and hard. Mei-ling Soong had said her sister would not change.

It was just at this time that a man of the Nationalist Party called at the house in Hankow, where Ching-ling

was staying. Because of her continued connection with the Communist part of the Revolution, he said to her with some anger, and certainly no courtesy, "If you were anyone but Madame Sun, we would cut your head off! It is the fate of others like you!"

To which she replied in her quiet way, "If you were the revolutionists you pretend to be, you would cut it off anyway!" The light in her eye was dark and challenging.

After the break in Hankow on July 14, 1927, Ching-ling openly made a statement denouncing the policy of Chiang Kai-shek. Many things had held her back from this, her own nature and her hatred of public speech, but she urged herself to it, saying, "I must, because they are setting up policies which do violence to the intentions of Dr. Sun. I must because if the revolution is only a change of government and not a real change in the life of the people, then it means nothing." And because she believed deeply, even though so many wise Chinese disagreed, at last her own words went out to the public, saying:

"The people are the basis of the new development. We must not betray them. . . . Thirty years ago Dr. Sun was thinking and speaking in terms of revolution that would change the status of the Chinese peasant. . . . In 1911 he wrote an article on the agrarian question in which he said the basis of reform in China must be an agrarian revolution."

Friends said to her, "Will you risk your very life in making a public statement of this kind?" Others said, "If you wanted to make enemies, you could not find a better way of doing it!"

But Ching-ling's personal sorrow was now greater than

fear of danger or outside enemies. "It is the attitude of my family that is worst of all," she cried bitterly to herself. "They, too, are swept into this new thing and have forgotten that for which we all set out—and Mei-ling—can we ever come together again?"

Fate had twisted things curiously, making the break with her family inevitable, for Dr. and Mrs. Kung were busily at work in the Nanking center of the Nationalist government, and Mei-ling, that sparkling, witty child who had clung to Ching-ling's hand through the years in Wesleyan, was by now interested for her own sake in General Chiang Kai-shek!

But because he saw the danger to Ching-ling, and the pathos of the broken family ties, and somehow felt a greatness in her even though that greatness was devoted to a cause in which he himself could not believe, Chiang did all he could to get her to leave Hankow, as soon as the separation of the Nationalists became clear.

All through April and May of that year, 1927, she refused to go. Then, suddenly, without warning, she was gone. "I do not know where," she told a few of her intimate friends. "But you will hear from me again—from *me*, the one who loves to make public pronouncements!" Her gentle face was wry with a strange, almost pathetic humor, and then resumed its usual serious sweetness. "But we shall never for a moment forget. The real revolution has not yet begun!"

Her eyes were smoldering as she turned away from the few who knew of her secret departure. "It is the spirit of Dr. Sun," one muttered, all but stumbling and falling as he climbed into his rickshaw to be taken home.

To all who knew her, it was apparent that Ching-ling

had only begun her hard, lonely fight to bring into the leaders the true spirit of Dr. Sun's dreams.

"They cannot forget themselves and think of these others," she had cried, almost in tears, to Dr. Sun, several years before, and human nature was still the same.



XXXIV

MEI-LING WAS WATCHING GENERAL Chiang. By now he was the most important military man of the country. He was getting what he wanted, but his wants increased. And he was by no means unaware of Mei-ling Soong, who was more than beautiful and witty and charming. She was discreet and able, besides, and she belonged to a family which had all these qualities. She was sister to Madame Kung who could manage almost any political situation, knowing, everybody said, more of politics than any man in China. She was sister to that small, powerful person against whose determination he had been struggling for two years.

But several things stood in the way of his getting Mei-ling Soong and he saw that very clearly. For one thing, she was an ardent Christian and a member of a strong Christian family, while his religion so far had consisted chiefly in bowing before ancestral graves at appointed festival times. For another thing, there was the matter of his wife, even though it was so many years since he had seen her that he was not even sure of recognizing her if he met her now.

Considering the state of his affairs, Chiang shook his head confusedly and muttered, "Mei-ling would have

none of me as I am, that is certain. Besides, there is her mother."

But with the same determination which he showed in military affairs, General Chiang set out to win Mei-ling. Never before had a man of position in China openly wooed a woman. But General Chiang knew what he wanted and did not care who laughed. And Mei-ling, who might have had anyone, looked on secretly delighted and said to herself, "At least he is as courageous in this as in other things—yet there are many obstacles."

In family discussion Mother Soong, less sure of herself since Dr. Sun had become the most beloved and honored man of China, asked repeatedly, "But what of his family and his background? War lords come with the wind and are gone again, and this man is not even a Christian!"

And Ai-ling, keeping an ear to the ground to learn more of this suitor, said confidently to her mother, "But all Shanghai is behind him, also the Nationalist Government in Nanking, and soon all China will be! Do not be too severe, but let time pass. Things work out in their time."

Even though Ching-ling was self-exiled and alien to them all because of this strange devotion to an impossible ideal, yet the fact remained that no one could fail to see that as the widow of Dr. Sun her position was assured. In the hearts of the masses there was sympathy and adoration and this no one could fail to feel.

While the family waited, Chiang Kai-shek began the rearrangement of his own affairs. "It can be done, for more difficult things have many times been done," he reassured himself. "I shall go to Chikow and settle affairs with the mother of my son. I shall always see that she is cared for. Surely she will agree to a paper of divorce."

It was soon done, and with this matter settled, Chiang went openly to Japan, where the Soong family happened then to be on a visit, to ask Mei-ling's hand. The welcome was not over-cordial on the part of anyone except Mei-ling. Mother Soong, troubled to see him so frequently at the house, murmured disapprovingly, "He is not a Christian. And even though his first wife was chosen for him in the old way and long a stranger, nevertheless he is divorced. I do not like it."

But after thinking the matter over carefully she decided, "He must become a Christian before he can have Mei-ling!"

She watched for the time to come. They were always there, Mei-ling and Chiang Kai-shek, sitting together in the secluded beauty of the small and lovely Japanese garden. Mother Soong had lived too long not to understand what their faces meant. Yes, Chiang must become a Christian or he could not have her daughter. Mei-ling herself should demand it, she added to herself with sudden heat.

And then Chiang came to her. With utmost respect he told her about his affairs and what he wished. "I have done all I can to make my affairs right," he said. "I have a paper of divorce from the mother of my son whom I myself had not seen for many years, and as you know she was chosen for me in the old way, without my seeing her. Most important of all, your honored daughter has made known her willingness. We pray your consent to this, our most urgent wish."

It was well and bravely said. Mother Soong looked closely at this man standing erect before her. He was the commander of soldiers, the most successful, the most

important man in China. For an instant she wavered. She could not let Mei-ling miss such a chance as this. Then her conviction came back to her. No, he must become a Christian.

Soberly, not answering all he said, she asked the one question, "Are you ready to become a Christian?"

The man stood as before, giving no sign of surprise or yielding. "It would be easy for me to say yes," he said quietly, with his former dignity, "but instead I can truly say only that I am willing to study it."

She was taken aback at this. Yes, he could have lied. He could have gone through an empty form and made appearances right, but he chose to do this. There was no end to the courage of this man!

He stood waiting, his face the same. What should she say? At last she coughed and cleared her throat and said, her eyes intense behind the gold-rimmed glasses, "I shall present you with a Bible, then, and I believe you are sincere." After all, there was no power like the power of the Word. She had done what she could and the rest was with God.

But to Mei-ling, during those days of courting, Chiang Kai-shek was much more than a military man or a rising leader. He was a poet, too. He understood and valued the beauty of those days in Japan and of the life there.

And to Mei-ling he said nothing of Christianity or of himself. Instead, knowing her zeal for reform, he told of his plans for their country and asked her to join him. It would demand the utmost of them both.

"A very great deal would depend upon us," he said, "for China needs those who see the vision of bringing her many divisions into one whole, working for a united coun-

try. You have the same eagerness which I have and you have much ability and much training which I have not. I could doubtless accomplish a great deal more because of your help, but probably you would find many opportunities for your energy otherwise not open to you. Both skill and design are needed to make a perfect object," he added as a poetic touch, and it was this combination of clear-cut ability and poetic sense in Chiang that Mei-ling loved.

To her he was never what he was to others. She had known him for one destined for greatness and that had quickened her imagination. Yet she loved him most for the tender qualities which few others saw. He was necessary to China in her present situation, but it was the man she loved and not the leader.

The evening before he returned to Shanghai, Mei-ling spoke of Ching-ling, a sadness filling her that things should remain so confused and frustrated between them. "Both of you love China and would do anything to help her," she said slowly, "but the ways you do it differ, that is all. Ching-ling believes in complete change in the way of governing the people, you in improving what we have. It is the point of view. Your way will bring peace and unity more quickly than her way. She wants to change everything. She has always been that way. As a child, she was always thinking about the peasants and the poor. And she always will. She will oppose us all because she feels we are denying the very basis of Dr. Sun's plans. But she won't hold anything against us. She is the kindest person, but still the most determined. But I think our ways will never cross again."

They sat in silence then, a quietness over both of them.

And then Mei-ling said, reaching for Chiang's hand, "You must understand this about my sister. She is willing to suffer and give up, even to be hated, for the principle she holds."

Then, after an instant, Chiang's voice came back quickly and strongly, "But she does what she wants to do, doesn't she? It gives her pleasure to do this for her people."

Mei-ling faltered, "Yes." And silence fell between them.

Their wedding ceremony was performed by a Y.M.C.A. secretary, with a civil service following at the large Majestic Hotel in Shanghai. The ball-room was decorated for the occasion to resemble the interior of a church. Clusters of white chrysanthemums and ferns lined the path down which the bride was to come. An alcove, in which hung the draped portrait of Dr. Sun, had been erected and took the place of the altar. A thousand guests, including many Westerners, waited until the bride appeared on the arm of her brother, T. V. Soong, and then broke into loud applause. Bride and groom met at the alcove before the picture of Dr. Sun. Tsai Yuan-pei, the famous revolutionary politician and scholar, delivered a speech which was the chief part of the ceremony. This was followed by the usual picture-taking and feasting, during which the couple left for a honeymoon in the mountains of Chekiang.

In the moment's quietness during which Mei-ling escaped to change her dress, Mother Soong, heaving a little at the excitement and the stairs, whispered, "Now don't forget about the Bible study just because you're married."

You've done well, Mei-ling, and brought honor to us all."

And Ai-ling, stunning in her shimmering gown, rushed in to say in her own important way, "It was lovely, Mei-ling, and did you notice all the guests who were there? It went off beautifully—all the proper people.... Now, have a good time, and we shall see you before long. Everything lies before you, Precious Sister!"

For the last few years, at all these important affairs, Charlie Soong had been only a vague, shadowy figure, slipping in and out and never to be depended upon. Mother Soong excused him, saying, "It is his age. He is like a child again." And the children, realizing that he was past his prime and growing a little feeble in his mind, loved him for those earlier days because of his kindness, his understanding and his endless faith. Now everything was dim to him except the printing press. It was his very life and all who knew him watched and said, "It is Old Charlie. How he loves the Press—and no wonder!"

So on Mei-ling's wedding day Charlie Soong came unobtrusively up to find her as she made herself ready to go away. "Yes, yes, you are married, my little Mei-ling. When the Soong Six, you know— Well, I must be getting back to the Press. They are always busy there, Mei-ling, it's the biggest in the world! Think of it! The biggest in the world!"

It was true. The Commercial Press had become the greatest printing house in the world and Charlie Soong had dreamed it and made the dream come true. But Mei-ling, pressing his hand as he left, felt her throat suddenly ache, "I shall never see him again. Even now, he is gone.

His body is still here going its little round but the man is gone—except as he lives in all of us.”

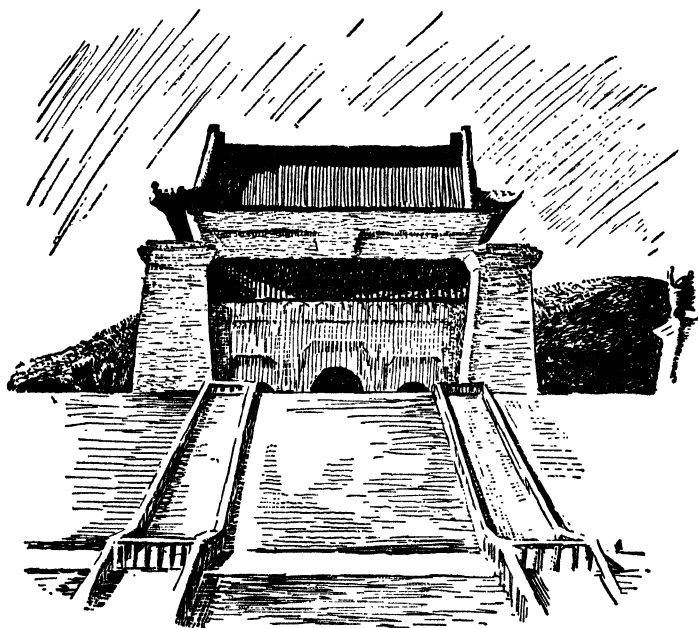
She was as sure as when a few weeks later she got the word, that she would never see Charlie again. Charlie Soong died that summer, never conscious of death but only of life and all that there was to do.

XXXV

NOW MORE THAN EVER, AFTER THE WEDDING, the Soong family was determined to have Ching-ling come back. The family was united and secure in its position with the new government. Moreover, slowly plans were being laid for the final honors to Dr. Sun. There was to be a burial which would draw representatives from many countries and add glory to the new regime.

It was time now, they felt, that unsound ideas be dropped and that Ching-ling join herself to what was suitable and sure—the Soong family, and the Nationalist Government which had set up its headquarters in Nanking and was slowly building itself into national strength. The Soongs were a part of this government and Ching-ling, as widow of the founder, must ally herself with it. All this Mother Soong said in her determined way, feeling that Ching-ling's wayward foolishness could no longer be condoned. Ai-ling said so, too, with charming assurance, perceiving many things that they might do together if Ching-ling would come back. But Mei-ling said nothing. She knew her sister's nature, and though she longed for the old, deep understanding that had lain between them, yet she knew it was more impossible than ever.

From Europe Ching-ling answered all their pleadings and commands. Time had not changed her determination. She denounced again the new Nationalist Government and said once more that it was not the kind of government of which Dr. Sun had dreamed and for which he had lived.



Her words came like a wave of coldness to her family and to those others who were beginning to lay great plans for the formal and permanent burial of Dr. Sun. Against the side of Nanking's famous Purple Mountain a mausoleum had been rising—simple white marble banked with evergreens and approached by flights of graceful snow-white steps. Its simplicity and dignity sug-

gested to those who saw it the beauty of the majestic Altar of Heaven in Peking.

Here against the mountain-side, in a crypt with marble pillars and the blue porcelain tiles beloved by China, Dr. Sun was to be finally laid as the Father of New China. This must bring Ching-ling back, her family said—this event, which would make Madame Sun add her strength to the new government's struggle. Everyone who was conscious of affairs counted on this hope—Madame Sun would come back.

And then came the word that Ching-ling returned to China only for the burial of her husband.

Still not despairing, the Nationalist Government elected her to the Central Executive Committee, the acting body of its organization. Surely she could not refuse this, for she must see that so long as she took no part her efforts would be disrupting and futile, but once a part, her place would be assured.

"We shall meet her, we shall bring her home. She cannot refuse. Let us have an end of this," Mother Soong said, wondering vaguely at the power in her daughter. And secretly Ai-ling and even Mei-ling thought with happiness that now, perhaps, the three of them would be together again.

Quietly Ching-ling crossed Europe and Asia. There was but one purpose in her and although she knew that other plans were laid, they held no place in her mind. "Let the people do this last reverence for Tsung-li," she thought. "Their hearts are still sore from loss and are to be more sore yet when slowly they discover that the Nationalist plans are not those for which my husband labored. Let them honor him, then, but never shall I fail

to live for that ideal. It costs family and friends. It costs even power and brings defeat. But I must hold steadfast."

More nearly bitter than she had ever been, Ching-ling arrived in China. But to every invitation and request to ally herself with her family, or with the government, came only her final, "No."

In the long procession winding its way through the newly widened streets of Nanking, the capital, to Purple Mountain with its glistening shrine, the widowed Ching-ling was a small, frail, veiled figure moving alone just behind the casket. Her own family looked, and felt they saw a stranger. Officials stared and asked among themselves how this one, so small and weak, could hold so great a power or be so fearless. The masses, crowded all around, gazing with curious eyes, nudged each other and said aloud, "Such courage and devotion! They say she refuses even money and reputation, that she may do honor to her husband." And many were more moved by her than by Dr. Sun, whom they had never seen.

The great funeral was over. To Ching-ling it was only a display in honor of her husband while the purpose of his whole life was being overlooked. She went back then to the house in Shanghai where they had lived when they had not been in Japan or Canton or elsewhere. Rue Molière again with all its memories!

People came. Seeing she would not co-operate, they pleaded with her. "If then you will only remain silent! Take no part, if you wish, but simply remain silent, so that the organization may go forward." Others said, "The revolution against the old war lords has succeeded. The fine buildings of the Nationalist Government are going up in Nanking. It is only two years since Dr. Sun's death

—you are his widow. Everyone would acclaim you! The victory is partly yours. Why do you not demand it?”

From still others, officials in the Nanking government, she discovered that nothing she said was taken as her own opinion. In a crowd she overheard some say laughingly, “She is a mouthpiece, that is all, a mouthpiece for the Communist idea. What a pity she is now in something so much too great for her!”

In her heart, Ching-ling replied with an up-surging warmth, “I am a mouthpiece for carrying out Dr. Sun’s intention, and I will always be just that.”

But there were some who watched her, amazed that one who so little liked publicity and politics could have the courage and tenacity and understanding that she constantly showed. No one ever knew what to expect of Ching-ling, for her natural reticence seemed out of keeping with her fearlessness. On August first of that year, International Anti-War Day, she sent a telegram publicly denouncing the policies of the Nationalist Government.

When news of her statement got out, people in Nanking looked at each other amazed and said, “No! It cannot be. There is some mistake. Madame Sun—never!”

“They do not understand,” said Ching-ling sadly.

But no misunderstanding hurt her so much as that of her own family. “Yet how could it be otherwise?” she told herself. “They believe in one way of working; I in another. Yet the dream of us all is a new, a fine China.”

This division in belief was now quite clear. All the others of the Soong family were deep in work for the new Nationalist Government. T. V. became Minister of Finance, Dr. H. H. Kung, Vice-president of the Central

Executive Committee in the government organized by General Chiang Kai-shek, now the foremost man of China.

And Chiang, faced with the difference in beliefs between those in whom Ching-ling believed and those in whom the others of the Soong family had faith, became convinced that the Nationalist Government—the new Republic of China—must be acclaimed the real Chinese government. This he did, thus formally outlawing the group that held Ching-ling's sympathies. The latter, undaunted, removed themselves to the provinces, there continuing the work to which they were devoted.

Chiang now concentrated upon the necessity for conquering the war lords of the old northern regime, who still defied the change. Leading his army north, he captured Peking, changing its name to Peiping and raising the flag of the Chinese Republic above it. But in the trenches and on the long march, he did not forget his promise to Mother Soong.

Whenever he could he studied his Bible. Things which Mei-ling had said came back to him in the long periods of waiting. What was life and where did it lead? He was the most powerful man in China, but even he would come to his end. There were times, too, when he felt helpless and alone, as though he were working in the dark. Over and over, as he had never done before, he questioned the meaning of life. And to Mei-ling, who was following close behind him, he wrote, "It is as though my eyes see for the first time. Before, I thought I knew why I lived. But now I know that I was blind, unseeing, led along by circumstances from one thing to another. I have begun to pray and it brings peace."

Mei-ling, reading, knew he told the truth. "Now we understand each other in yet another way," she said in deep happiness.

And when Chiang came to her, she rejoiced to have him say in his direct way, "Your religion has come to mean so much to me that I want to become a Christian."

A little later, in Shanghai, they sought out Pastor Kaung. "Why do you wish to join the church?" he asked Chiang, searchingly.

"Because I wish to share in the religion of my wife, and because of what this religion has come to mean to me," Chiang answered gravely.

Early on an October morning, in the living room of the Soong home and in the presence of Mei-ling, Mother Soong, Ai-ling, and T. V., General Chiang was examined and baptized a Christian by Pastor Kaung.

"I am happy and thankful," Mother Soong said, her eyes bright behind her glasses. She was getting old, and though she was as alert and zealous as ever, she had begun to list the things she hoped to see come about. This was one. Now, except for Ching-ling, her family was around her. That separation must be accepted, she knew, for nothing would change Ching-ling.

So it was that Mother Soong kept her mind at peace because of her other children, until July of the year 1931. Then, like a flash of lightning, tragedy came close. T. V., on his way from Nanking to Shanghai, was nearly killed by an assassin. They tried to keep it from her, but her old eyes and ears, used to knowing all, quickly suspected, then insisted upon the truth. Although she showed no signs of its effect beyond saying quickly, "But he is safe!

But he is safe!," the shock hurt her. The stern will, the burning zeal were still there, but she was old.

Now life became too much. Mother Soong died, never having recovered from the shock of the attempt on her son's life. Shanghai would gladly have given her a great funeral. But she had arranged years before that there was to be no costly ceremony, no flowers. Any farewell gift was to go to the orphanage in which she was so deeply interested. And so it was. To her memory stand endless reforms, an orphanage, a church, and her influence upon hundreds of people.

XXXVI

IN 1933 AI-LING AND HER HUSBAND WENT abroad and on the journey they spent two days in Wesleyan College. Years had passed but something of the old enthusiasm swept Ai-ling.

"It is the same, H. H.," she said to him with deep pleasure. "One can almost feel the atmosphere of the place. There is the dormitory where we lived, there the Ainsworths', there Professor Burks'. It all comes back to me. It was the last time the three of us were really together."

Again, asked to speak to the students, Ai-ling laughed as she said from her seat on the platform, "I feel almost as though I might forget myself and give one of my old readings, for here is where we had to practice our expression."

All during her stay, one thought possessed her, her wish to do something for her Alma Mater. "What do you need most?" she asked the authorities, and always the answer was the same, "Scholarships for students who have not enough money." Ai-ling founded a scholarship and named it for Judge Guerry who had been president of the college during her student days.

"What is there about Wesleyan?" she asked her husband as they went on with their journey. "You felt it?

Father and Mother must have known it when they sent us there. I remember that while we were still only planning to come, Father used to say, 'If I can get them all to Macon, I shall be satisfied.' He knew what it would give us, and he was right. I sometimes wish our David could have gone there. But he has done well as it is. Soon twenty now—can you believe it, H. H.? We are getting old."

"You are like your mother, you will never be old," said her husband. "Besides, what does it matter? We are busy, we live our lives, and perhaps we accomplish a little something."

"We do accomplish something," she said firmly with a straight, humorless look into Dr. Kung's face. There were times when she could not quite tell what he meant. Of course they accomplished something! Look at Mother and Father and all they had done, and at T. V., and at what Mei-ling was doing, and even Ching-ling, though hers was an accomplishment the wrong way about, and of course H. H. and herself! No one could say they had done nothing. She could name many people who weren't so far along. It was that little, teasing smile in H. H.'s eye that put her off so that she scarcely knew what to think. She liked a real joke but it was a little uncomfortable to feel that she was being laughed at. H. H. was the only one who dared to do it, though of course he made up for it other ways.

"We do accomplish something, don't we?" she asked again with a smile and yet the familiar look of determination around her mouth.

"Of course," said her husband, the twinkle gone and a serious look on his face. "We Chinese have to accom-

plish things at twice the usual rate of a nation because we are so far behind and the world will not wait."

"And I am not sorry, are you?" Ai-ling asked, her face alive with feeling.

Old Father and Mother Soong in their graves could have been convinced of this one thing, that their children were working for China. Riding a child on his crossed leg, Charlie had sung half in play, "When the Soong Six get into action—" and the Soong Six were in action, not as they had foreseen it, but in action none the less.

Over in China, Mei-ling had now become the General's private adviser, confidante, and secretary, with a special task of interpreting to him the politics and economics of the Western world. She read many magazines and papers, printed in English, and made digests of important happenings so that he might know what took place each day. The urge within her was always, "He must know this! He must know this!" Her eagerness seemed to help her to an almost uncanny perception of what was significant. The United States, especially, seemed to bear upon their problem. Reading her digests to him, she would explain them saying, "This means—" And so she opened up the world to him.

But she was doing more than interpret the world to the General. She was interpreting China to the world. Every day, when the newspaper men came to her, Madame Chiang would say to herself, "Perhaps in this way I may make the outside world understand what a vast, difficult problem we face in our desire to establish a democracy in China."

And she would then take time to explain patiently China's difficulties and hopes. "Can you not see," she

would say, "that much time, much effort is necessary before we can be a truly united country? We are so large. The idea of democracy is so new to so many thousands of my people. We must go to them, tell them what we plan. And there are some who wish to keep their power, who do not wish to change; some, on the other hand, who wish to change too much."

Some who wish to change too much—she never spoke of them that her thoughts did not wing their swift way to Ching-ling's side. Her sister!

General Chiang's work inevitably took him to the far provinces of China. Resolutely Mei-ling accompanied him. Planes could go where trains and ships could not, and at a great saving of time. When she first announced her decision to accompany him, Chiang tried to dissuade her. "You may be very uncomfortable, airsick perhaps. We must lodge wherever we can. My men never know when I shall arrive and there is no time for preparation. I wish it to be so, for I must have full knowledge of just how matters stand. But you, why must you go?"

"To see," she replied, "and to learn, and to be with you. Why should I sit here in Nanking?"

And so they flew into parts of China which had almost no contact with the outside world, seeing what was being done in establishing the new democracy, checking on reports, and leaving almost before the countryside was aware of their presence. If their stopping place was only a mud-walled house in which the commanding officer had his headquarters, the General and Mei-ling accepted it graciously.

While they thus drew the outposts of China into their new government, they in turn came better to understand

the hardships of the people. "It is all very well to sit in Nanking and say thus and thus should be done. Too often orders simply cannot be carried out," Mei-ling fell into the habit of saying, thoughtfully.



Patiently trying to separate one thing from another, they studied and pondered. Just why was it that China could not pull herself together and go forward as a united nation? Why was it that the war lords did not stay conquered, but were forever rising up with new strength to oppose the national government? Could not the people

who joined them understand that by so doing they hurt themselves?

Even when there was a battle with one or another of these rebellious war lords, Mei-ling was not far behind the front line. Many who wondered that the General should risk his life in leading his own men to battle, also thought it fantastic that his wife should go into the danger zone, often helping with the wounded, encouraging them and giving her strength unselfishly and generously. "Madame Chiang does this!" they cried. "When has a woman of position done this?"

When the General himself asked, "Is it not too hard?," Mei-ling's reply was always the same. "It is not too hard. Did I marry you thinking we could live in peace? While there is fighting to be done, I am with you. But some day, some spring day when we need not think of war, we shall sit in peace, drinking in the fragrance of the flowering fruit trees, knowing our nation is united." She paused, then asked, "But will such time ever come? Or must we be forever fighting?"

"I do not know," the man beside her said slowly. "When all else is accomplished, there will yet remain those with whom Ching-ling is working—the Communists. But since we must fight, it is better to fight together."

Together! It was a profoundly comforting thought. For a moment Mei-ling yielded to the glow of it, then again her thoughts went swiftly winging to Ching-ling. Must the day come when armies drawn up in battle array would find Ching-ling allied to the enemy?

Firmly Ching-ling held to her course, now often angered that China was divided against herself.

But the anger she felt at the clear division within her

country was no greater than that which she felt as she watched the movements of Japan. She remembered how Dr. Sun had foreseen that Japan would one day attack China, and the time came when she could not stand silently by with her country so apparently indifferent to this other danger. For Japan was even now moving into China. She had taken Manchuria, Jehol. Why did not Chiang do something?

In white heat she wrote to him, demanding united action. "Is your own desire for a certain kind of government greater than your feeling for our native land?" she asked.

It was the beginning of a long struggle. Chiang continued to work for a more united China, before his forces should go against an outside enemy. So convinced was he of this necessity that he refused to overlook differences, as yet, when those to whom Ching-ling now pledged her allegiance offered to co-operate under any leadership which would move against the Japanese invasion.

Ching-ling continued to speak and to urge united action before it might be too late. What she said was true. The crisis with Japan had come.

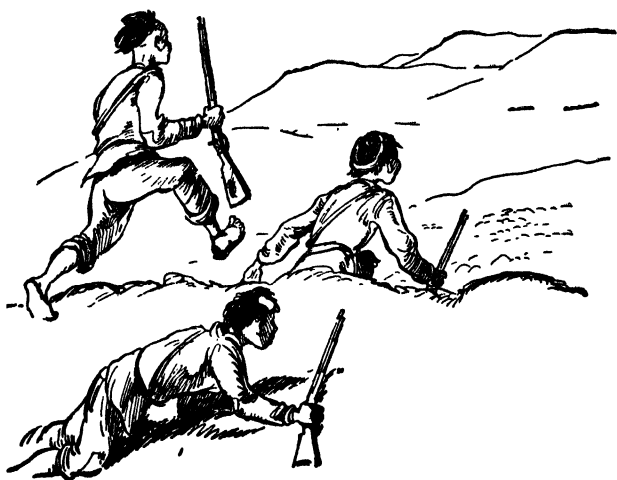
But while the world read Ching-ling's words and shook its head, amazed at this small, mild-faced, middle aged woman, the Anti-Communist campaign went on. Mei-ling, reading what her sister had written, found her eyes stinging with unshed tears. "If only you could see, Ching-ling!" she whispered. "We must be united before we can stand against a foreign enemy."

To the General, Mei-ling said little of Ching-ling. But once, seeing the pain in her dark eyes as they talked of Ching-ling, he said to her, "She does not see all that is

at stake. I only do what must be done." And the lines in his face hardened.

"I understand," Mei-ling told herself. "He is a militarist and a practical man. Ching-ling dreams a dream. People are more human than she thinks."

Mei-ling's confidence in her husband remained steadfast. "He will succeed," she thought. "Ai-ling was right."



XXXVII

SO GENERAL CHIANG PUSHED ON TO UNIFY China. By the autumn of 1934, all but two provinces were under his control. Resolutely, he planned the strategy necessary to the completion of his task, building hundreds of miles of military roads and thousands of small fortifications and surrounding the mountain strongholds of his native enemies.

He felt confident of his plans, certain of success. Yet despite the careful strategy, the Communists escaped and began a desperate march through towering mountain ranges, across dangerous turbulent rivers. It was a march which dramatically revealed their courage and allegiance to that in which they believed.

And the General, learning of it, said to Mei-ling, "It is the spirit which our own troops need."

For a moment, Mei-ling did not reply. Then she said quietly, "One must have a conviction to be willing to live or to die like that."

The words were the beginning of an idea. Slowly it took shape in both their minds, not becoming articulate until a day when Mei-ling said, at last, "There must be some way to make the people of China convinced that it is worth while to give one's utmost to one's country, to make them proud of themselves and of all that is their

heritage. It is a conviction that must be put into the everyday lives of our own people."

Almost at once the General was saying, "We have been thinking together, all these weeks. I have felt it. Our people need a new stimulus, a new urge. I have remembered what you said. China must have a new way of life. The people must see that what they do and how they live matters. Mei-ling, let us plan for a New Life Movement in the very provinces where Ching-ling's mistaken friends have striven to establish their own ideas! Let us go to Kiangsi province, where they have been at work."

With the idea of the New Life Movement in her mind, Mei-ling accompanied the General on a tour of inspection through Kiangsi province. And in an article published a few weeks later, she wrote, "Everything that could not be carried away was damaged. Devastation and death pervaded the hamlets. A Chinese village is full of life, movement, rhythm—the cries of hawkers, the laughter of children, good-natured jostling of people in the street, the grunting of pigs running at large. But here, not even a lean dog was in sight.

"Into the open fields I hurried. I could not bear to linger in the village. But again! Instead of swaying fields of golden grain, I found here a stubble of blackened roots, there a heap of broken tile, and beyond, barren wasteland as far as the eye could see.

"We passed a village where a few old men were basking in the sun. 'Where are the people of the village?' I asked.

"They continued to gaze into space. At last one of them answered listlessly, 'The Communists have been here!'

"Then after another long silence, as though loath to

“Some of the people have been killed. Some were carried away. Some escaped, Heaven knows where. We were too old and weary, so we hid beneath the straw and we are left,” they said sadly.

“They alone were there to tell the tale.”



At last Mei-ling was at peace. “Ching-ling has not seen things like this,” she said. “She thinks of the dream, not the terrible price being paid for her belief. Let her look at Kiangsi—the tragedy, the death—the work of those with whom she is working.”

With renewed conviction, Mei-ling joined her husband in his planning. The purpose of their movement must be

to make everyone in China careful of his own condition and proud of himself.

General Chiang outlined the New Life Movement. These were its chief points:

1. Let us regard yesterday as a period of death, today as a period of life. Let us rid ourselves of old abuses, and build up a new nation.

2. Let us accept the heavy responsibilities of serving the new nation.

3. Let us observe rules, have faith, honesty, and humility.

4. Let us keep our clothing, eating, living, and traveling habits simple, orderly, plain and clean.

5. Let us face hardships willingly, strive for frugality.

6. Let us acquire adequate knowledge and have moral integrity as citizens.

7. Let our actions be courageous and rapid.

8. Let us act on our promises, or, better, act without promising.

The aims were symbolized by four Chinese characters representing ancient virtues, courtesy, service, honesty, high-mindedness. The movement spread rapidly, started by a tremendous cleanliness campaign begun in Nanking on May the first. By the end of 1935 it was in full swing, a movement for a nation's new life.

Mei-ling felt a deep happiness. She wrote to a friend, "In Kiangsi where areas are reclaimed, the first step is to send in a group of government-trained men. They first make a survey of the area to find out the people's greatest

need, and then organize co-operatives so that the people can get supplies on long time loans. In many cases the group plows land which now belongs to no one since owners or tenants have been killed or have fled.

"Doctors and nurses are also sent to take care of those too ill to work. Men from sixteen years of age upwards



are organized into self-defense corps, taught how to use arms and build defenses. The greatest help, however, comes in the feeling of common effort and self-reliance. There also begins to be a feeling of confidence in the government and a knowledge of what its intentions are.

"Schools for children are started, and there is a broad

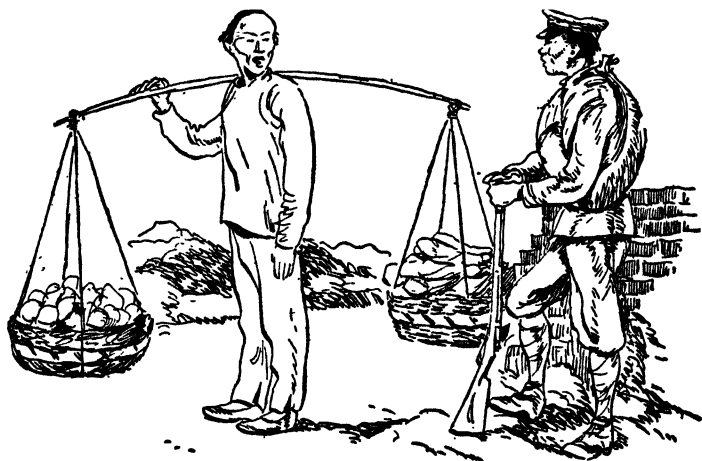
campaign for common sense, courtesy, and integrity. Several other organizations are gradually taking part in the work started by the New Life Movement so that there will soon be many experts in various fields putting their efforts into the work of bringing new life to China. It is a challenge to young men of ability.

"All this began, at first, in the devastated provinces where Communists had been, but now it is spreading to include the whole nation. Students are pledging themselves to work for it in their own villages, and it is a serious pledge. The New Life Movement is within the reach of the humblest citizen and also has much to contribute to the well-educated."

But Mei-ling saw other sides of the movement, too. To many of the common Chinese people, the new ideas were at first almost laughable. With their old habits of accepting things as they were, it was amusing to see large signs telling where one was to spit. With customary ease, they said among themselves, "It is too much trouble, all this! But it is only for a little while. They cannot watch forever, and we cannot trouble to walk half a mile to a certain spot. We have always spat where we pleased." However, some found something unpleasant happened when they broke rules. It was not pleasant, for instance, to be publicly led to a cuspidor when one spat on the floor in the comfortable old way. Coolies, toiling under their loads balanced on poles laid across their shoulders, looked in utter astonishment at the neatly uniformed officers who halted their rhythmic walk and said sternly, "Button up your jacket, and tuck up the ends of your girdle. Slovenliness is not allowed since the New Life Movement." Slowly they set down their loads, and with

fingers shaking with weariness buttoned up the jackets which they had opened to let in the cooling breeze, and tucked out of sight a dangling inch of the girdle bound around the waist to support the trousers.

"The New Life Movement!" Mei-ling heard one man say. "What is it that does not allow one to open his jacket while he works, not to mention remove it altogether on



a blistering hot day? Whose movement then is this?" She laughed a little and then was sad.

But incidents of this kind were only passing ones. Much more widespread was the deadly earnestness with which young Chinese turned toward the government and pledged themselves to work for this new movement. Letters and requests for instructions poured in from places a thousand miles inland. Students were starting schools for illiterate adults and children, teaching them after their own school work was done, and they wanted all the help they could get. Some of them were walking miles

every day. Were they going about it the right way? Might they have more textbooks and materials?

Mei-ling was almost buried under all that was asked of her. She worked feverishly, sending out all the helps she could obtain and preparing more. And as she did it, she smiled at the pictures in the back of her mind. Many a man who before had not known or cared about his country, was being stirred to new loyalty, and many a woman, interested before in only the baby at her breast, now said, laughing a little in embarrassment, "We will teach him to be a little patriot with all the other Chinese."

中國



XXXVIII

WHILE THE NEW LIFE MOVEMENT spread through China, stirring and awakening the people, Ching-ling, far away, was saddened by word of the suffering endured by her friends. There was a touch of gray, now, in the hair at her temples and the lines in her face had deepened. Yet she continued in her belief.

Ai-ling, in her Shanghai home, also remained steadfast in her different loyalty. An American college friend, visiting her at this time, found her quite as she had been in college, but more poised, more charming, stronger in personality.

Of her visits with Ai-ling, she wrote home, "Our first day in China, we had lunch with Madame H. H. Kung. It was a gracious thought on her part to receive us so beautifully a few hours after our arrival. This was only the beginning of many opportunities she gave us of being with her and her family, and of seeing China through the eyes of one so close to the government. She often sent for me to spend an informal hour over the tea cup, or to take a ride that would reveal to me things that no one else could show me. One afternoon we drove by the little church built by her mother which is now supported by her children. Ai-ling spoke often of this wonderful mother

that afternoon and of what a loss her going had been to them all.

"Madame Kung holds a place of leadership in the affairs of China that is not generally known, but is tremendously felt by the official family. She keeps many secretaries busy all day and looks after the business affairs of her husband in Shanghai while he spends four days each week in his government office in Nanking. Although she owns four beautiful homes, three of which I was in, and has a retinue of servants in each, hers is no life of ease.

"I marvel at the brightness of her eyes, the stateliness of her carriage, and her marvelous personal charm when she enters a room to meet her guests after having been on duty many of the twenty-four hours, directing the affairs of the nation. She shuns all publicity about any influence she might have and most generously concedes it to others."

It was Ai-ling's desire, if she could not draw all her family together, yet to be a refuge to them all, a stronghold to which they could come when they felt the need for security. She no longer hoped to understand Ching-ling, but her door was always open to her. Turning her thoughts to Mei-ling, she smiled to herself. Mei-ling was different! She needed no security, no help. It was quite amusing to remember how, as a young girl, Mei-ling had said she wanted to be a belle of Shanghai, and do things. Well, she had succeeded in doing far more in both ways than any of them had expected. It would always be so with her.

But Ching-ling—foolish child! Following a dream, protesting, refusing to co-operate! Could she not see that she

could do more for her country by being practical, constructive, working with the Nationalist Government?

How swiftly the years passed! David was a grown man now, a director of the Bank of China. And T. V. was Minister of Finance for the government, looked up to by everyone. Even T. A. and T. L. were doing well, one with the China Development Finance Corporation and one in the China Salt Monopoly. Yes, they had all lived up to Father and Mother Soong's hopes. They were all in action for China.

Ai-ling's estimate of Mei-ling was correct. Sturdily, valiantly she continued on her chosen way. In addition to her work for the New Life Movement, she became leader of the National Red Cross. She founded schools, one in Nanking for the sons and daughters of Chinese revolutionary heroes. She began the movement known as the Officers' Moral Endeavor Association, a sort of Chinese Y.M.C.A. She encouraged the founding of Chinese women's clubs throughout the country. She served as a member of the Legislative Department of the National Government. And she helped to carry on the National Economic Reconstruction Movement.

But none of this was so important to her as her life with the General. Beyond the fact that he was an heroic figure, he was to her a man who loved beauty, unawakened to much when she first knew him but ever since their marriage responsive to her subtle, guiding touch. She did not try to change him, she was too wise for that. She only made him see. Walking together in the twilight near their summer home in the mountains of Kiangsi, passersby could hear the low murmur of her voice, see her hand laid on his arm, catch the angle of his head bent

to her words. Without her, he might have been just another war lord, undoubtedly a great one but one who had missed his destiny.

Writing of her husband, Mei-ling said, "On New Year's Eve, my husband and I took a walk in the surrounding mountains. We discovered a tree of white plum blossoms, flowering profusely. What an omen of good luck! In Chinese literature the five petals of the winter plum portend the five blessings of joy, good luck, longevity, prosperity, and (to us most desired of all) peace! The General carefully plucked a few branches and carried them home. When our evening candles were lighted, he presented them to me in a little bamboo basket—a New Year's gift. The plum blossoms had looked lovely and graceful on the tree, but massed in the basket by candle light they took on an indescribable beauty, their shadows on the wall making clean, bold strokes like those of the great Ming artist, Pah Dah Shan Run. Perhaps you can see why I am willing to share the rigors of life at the front with my husband. He has the courage of the soldier, and the sensitive soul of a poet."

XXXIX

IN 1936 MEI-LING WAS HARD AT WORK IN Shanghai. She had undertaken something now which was more difficult than anything to which she had yet set her hand. This was the reorganization of the air force, in which graft and dishonesty hampered the General at every turn.

One evening, he had turned suddenly to his wife and said, "It isn't fair to ask it. But there is no one else whom I can so fully trust."

So it was that Mei-ling was made Secretary-General of the National Aviation Commission, a mighty task, for everything must be reorganized. More than one night she lay sleepless, overwhelmed by a sense of her inadequacy and lack of experience. But morning found her poring over catalogues and dickering with shrewd foreign salesmen of airplanes.

As sorry situation after sorry situation was revealed in her investigations, the General cried despairingly, "Eighty-seven planes, you say, Mei-ling! All we have besides a few patched-up specimens? Where has the money gone? Where are our hundreds of planes? We must not mince matters in the punishment we mete out."

"But I shall investigate thoroughly first," said Mei-ling. "We shall call upon foreign experts to look into it

all, then we shall have their reports checked and rechecked. But from what I have already discovered, severe punishment will be inevitable for some of those who are even now protesting their loyalty to our government."

In the reorganization of the air force, Lieutenant Colonel Chenault, until recently with the United States Air Forces, and Garnett Malley, a highly regarded Australian airman, helped her. Mei-ling worked hard, her mind at its clearest and best. Changes were made and slowly a small but efficient air force resulted.

Spring and summer passed, and Mei-ling was still in Shanghai. Chiang was in the northwest. One afternoon, in the midst of a conference, Dr. Kung was announced to Mei-ling. Mei-ling had him shown to her private study and went quickly to see him. A strange premonition came to her at once. H. H. to see her? But he knew what she was doing. Why did he not wait until the conference was over?

Tea was served as was usual, then Mei-ling said quietly, "You have just arrived? Everything is well?"

"I have come as quickly as possible. You have heard nothing?"

"No. Please tell me at once what it is. I am used to all kinds of situations. Something is wrong with the General?" Mei-ling's face gave no sign, except that her eyes were set and unseeing.

"There has been a mutiny in the north and there is no news of the General," Dr. Kung said. Then, when he saw how quietly she took it, he added, "There is a report that he is kidnapped, but no one knows anything, as yet."

"He was in Sian," Mei-ling said quickly. "He went to aid Hsueh-liang in the control of his men, who were dis-

satisfied because they considered they were shunted off upon unwelcome duty. They have kept asking to be sent to fight Japan. The General has been to Sian once before, as you know, and nothing was accomplished. Anything may have happened, anything! For the General would not yield to them. I shall go to Nanking immediately. They may do something too hasty, there at the Government offices."

To Nanking, then, she went, and all along the way, the words, "The General is kidnaped," persisted in her mind. It was an unconfirmed report, but she was certain that it was true. And the more she thought of the situation, the more clearly she could see just what had happened. The Communists had shut themselves away in the northwest. Chiang had felt it necessary to continue his campaign against them. And since Hsueh-liang's troops had been in that part of China, what more logical than that they should be the ones assigned to that particular duty? But Hsueh-liang's troops had grumbled from the first. They were men from Manchuria. They did not want to fight Chinese. They wanted to fight the Japanese who had taken Manchuria and driven them out. More and more loudly they had grumbled, until Hsueh-liang had informed Chiang that they were on the point of rebellion! This was the sorry story which had been back of Chiang's flight to Sian to consult with the leaders of Hsueh-liang's army. And it was from that journey that he had not returned.

In Nanking, Mei-ling found indignant government officials already making plans for sending troops to the northwest, to punish the rebellious soldiers as well as to secure the release of General Chiang.

Mei-ling objected instantly. "No," she said to Dr. Kung, "that would greatly endanger the life of General Chiang. It is the wrong course. We must do nothing rashly. For if we can negotiate this thing in a peaceful way, it will be all to our advantage. I plead with you, don't use force—yet, at any rate."

But again and again came word from Sian, "General Chiang will negotiate with no one."

Just as definite as the General himself, Mei-ling would not alter her position. "Rightly or wrongly, I will fight sending a punitive expedition. And I shall continue to insist upon a calm and bloodless settlement of this affair," she said, her great eyes flashing. And she remained convinced that the whole story of what had happened was not yet known. Before they could proceed intelligently, they must know it all.

The afternoon of the second day after the capture, Mr. Donald, a foreign adviser, flew with his interpreter to Loyang, a city but one and one half hour's flight from Sian. From there he telegraphed Mei-ling that he could learn nothing more than they already knew in Nanking.

Mei-ling trusted Mr. Donald, an Australian newspaperman who had gone to China in 1902 and had long been a personal adviser to Hsueh-liang, as well as a friend of the General. Of him she had often said to the General, "There is no nonsense about that man Donald. He does not affect Chinese ways, he does not try to speak our language, he openly hates our food. But he is by nature a go-between and because of that he has a place in China where such a man is much in demand. He has sense."

So she proposed that Mr. Donald go into Sian itself,

which he did. Arriving, he sent word to Mei-ling, "I found Hsueh-liang and the General miles apart in thought. Hsueh-liang is unable to get the General to listen to what he has to say or even to move into more comfortable quarters. And the General upbraids him every time he tries to speak."

However, Mr. Donald did succeed in getting General Chiang to send orders back to Nanking that no punitive expedition of troops was to be sent until after December sixteenth, by which time it seemed that his release might be accomplished. Despite this hope, Mei-ling's anxiety increased. What if there should be an outbreak among Hsueh-liang's troops? Word of their rebellious spirit continued to come, giving basis to her fears that even Hsueh-liang would be helpless if they once got out of control. He himself would not do bodily harm to the General. He had held him prisoner only to win the transfer of his troops to other duty. But had he not started something which might well end in violence?

The time limit set for negotiations was extended, but again it drew nearer, until only three days remained of the period agreed upon for suspending fighting. In desperation, Mei-ling began to suggest that she herself fly to Sian to see what she could do as an intermediary. Her brother T. V. would accompany her, she pointed out.

To her suggestion, high government officials returned answer that more would be accomplished if T. V. went alone. By her remaining in Nanking, they argued, she could make certain that there would be no attack during T. V.'s stay in Sian. Doubtfully, Mei-ling agreed. T. V. went and, accompanied by Mr. Donald, returned to Nanking without having accomplished his object. And

he brought word of a plan which Mei-ling had suspected—that Hsueh-liang intended to take the General with him if he had to retreat.

It was word which strengthened her determination. She would go to Sian with Mr. Donald and T. V. the following morning. It did not occur to her that she was acting courageously. Yet none knew better than she the risk she would be running when she stepped from her airplane into a city held by mutinous troops. Once more she insisted upon a truce, this time until Christmas Day.

The sun shone brightly throughout the flight to Loyang, the first sunshine for a week. But at Loyang the field filled with bombers loaded for action was a far from reassuring sight. As Mei-ling again boarded the plane, she paused to impress upon the commander of the field the necessity for keeping all planes away from Sian unless ordered to attack by the General.

As they approached Sian, Mei-ling's nerves were taut. Below was the silver ribbon of the railway, bright through snow-covered mountains and the famous peaks of the Hwa mountains, leading at last to the valley and to Sian. In a moment they were circling over Sian and the airfield. But before the plane landed, Mei-ling took a revolver from her coat pocket and gravely handed it to Mr. Donald. If the soldiers seized her, she asked that he shoot her at once.

Looking tired and ashamed, Hsueh-liang was waiting for them at the airport. Mei-ling greeted him in her customary friendly manner and asked that she be taken at once to the General.

As she entered her husband's room, Chiang exclaimed, "Why have you come? You have walked into a tiger's

lair!" He shook his head sadly, and tears sprang to his eyes.

"I have come to see you," she replied, striving for naturalness above the turmoil in her heart.

Anger and dismay and pity almost overwhelmed her as she looked at him there, wan and ill in bed. And when she saw his injured hands and feet and legs, cut and bruised by brambles and rocks in his efforts to escape, it was difficult to keep from crying out against those who had been responsible.

But she held to her poise. "How did it happen?" she asked.

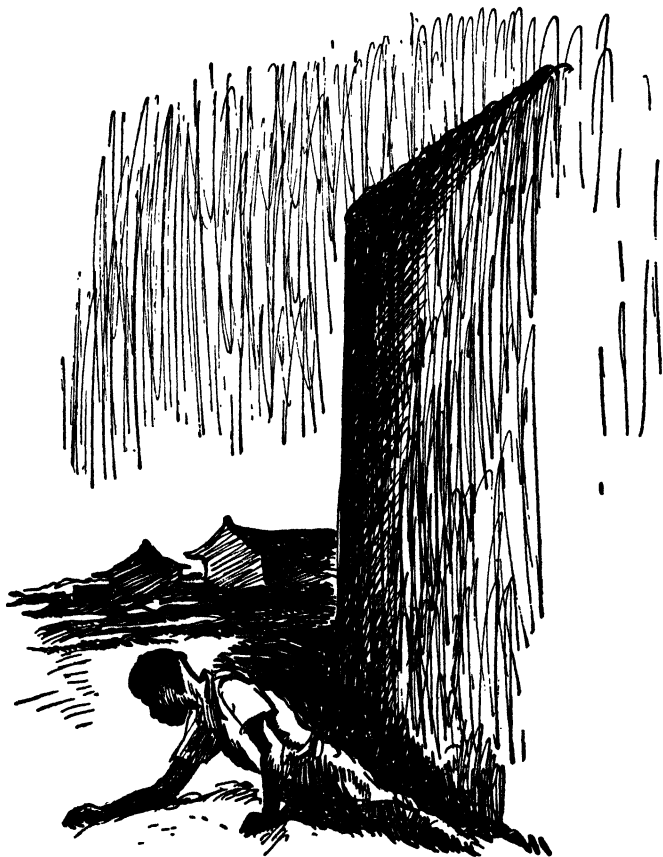
It was a long story, of mass meetings in Sian demanding that the troops be sent against Japan; of his own efforts to keep matters in hand; of the ultimate surrounding of his headquarters. "It was then I saw that I had been tricked," he told her. "And I fled out the back way, half dressed, scaling a high wall only to find a deep moat on the other side. It was my fall into the moat that caused my chief injuries."

Hiding at last in a cave, he had nevertheless been found by Hsueh-liang's troops and captured. "And they brought me here," he concluded. "But why did you come?" he went on sadly. "I beg you to sign nothing under pressure. The nation's good must be above our personal need."

Mei-ling promised, and days of endless conferences began. The General remained aloof, still refusing to talk with his captors. Nor could Mei-ling be certain of the outcome of her discussions with Hsueh-liang. At length came Christmas Day, with valiant but pitiful efforts at Christmas cheer, there in the General's room. This was

the last day of the truce! Who could tell what it might bring?

To keep up her own courage and give an aspect of certainty which she was far from feeling, Mei-ling began to



pack. Hour after hour passed. Still no word came. They seemed to be as far as ever from leaving. At last a coolie with a suitcase was seen crossing the courtyard. And T. V. came through the gates. The decision of their

captors had at last been made. The commander in charge of the city had agreed to let them pass out. Hsueh-liang, arriving, urged them to wait until the following morning. But Mei-ling would not countenance further delay.

"They might change their minds," she declared.

When General Chiang learned that they were free to leave, he felt the time had come when he could talk with Hsueh-liang and also to the man directly in charge of the mutinous troops. Then he learned to his astonishment that Hsueh-liang was determined to return to Nanking with him.

"I have two obligations," Hsueh-liang declared. "The first, to take full responsibility for that which has happened. The second, to fulfill my duty in showing that what has been done was not with a mutinous intent, nor against you personally, but to protest because you are not fighting Japan."

It was late when the last interview was over and they were ready to start for Nanking—the General, Mei-ling, Hsueh-liang, T. V., and Mr. Donald. As they stepped into the plane, Mei-ling felt a wild exultation. The General was free and there had been no bloodshed!

The release did not solve the basic issue which had brought about the capture of the General. That issue remained—what should be done about Japan? And now at last Chiang saw that immediate action must be taken. Back in Nanking, he announced publicly that the government has "adopted a policy of reorganization in the hope of internal peace and stability." And all knew that from now on all factions in China would in some way be united in the face of their common enemy from without.

More weakened by his experience than anyone had realized, the General was forced to enter a Shanghai hospital for rest and treatment. Mei-ling was constantly beside him, rejoicing in his progress toward health and talking of the future.

"I keep thinking of Ching-ling," she said. "We are all Chinese, our friends and hers. We share the same enemy. But how can we be really drawn together, those with her and those with us?"

The General leaned from his bed and took both Mei-ling's hands in his own. "We must find the way," he said.



XL

WHAT COULD BRING THE SCATTERED forces of China together? What could make her peasants on their isolated farms interested in more than the season's crops? What could weld into one nation, with a united aim, those who believed in different kinds of government for this great country—the friends of Mei-ling, of Ai-ling; the friends of Ching-ling; and that other group, those who still held to the old ways, the war lords and their adherents?

These were the questions over which Mei-ling and the General anguished; the very questions which had tortured Dr. Sun and which still tortured Ching-ling. But to Mei-ling and her husband, the greatest immediate need was to bring about unity under the Nationalist Government. This unity achieved, they would then turn their

chief attention to the enemy from without, Japan. To Ching-ling, opposition to Japan was more pressing than any other consideration. The ideal of her dreams remained for her a basic hope, one to be attained in her own lifetime. Nevertheless, immediate defense against Japan's aggression was urgent, crucial.

Thousands in China were protesting Japan's grasping at what she wanted—people on the streets who carried out boycotts and burned the Japanese goods found on the shelves of merchants, students who formed parades of protest, together with great sections of the country like Kwangtung Province which had threatened refusal to co-operate with the government at Nanking unless steps were taken at once against Japan.

Yet the people of China still shrank from war. They could not see the sense of such a method of settling differences. To live, not to die, was the object of man, to them. Only the worthless became soldiers, they said, clinging to their ancient belief that the scholar and the philosopher were the ones to be esteemed. And the General and Mei-ling, constantly striving to proceed wisely, went slowly in their work of bringing China together, and in especial in co-operating with Ching-ling's friends, whose beliefs they could never share.

Japan was not hesitating. Japan was not going slowly. The Japanese were out to conquer, and they did not fear suffering. Ching-ling, thinking of them and of her own people, was saddened. How different they were! Both were yellow-skinned, but they were so vastly unlike! In February of the year 1937, at the third Nationalist Party meeting, she presented a petition giving reasons for the necessity of opposing Japan at once. "Japan is economi-

cally unable to carry on a prolonged war," she declared. "The masses of the Japanese people are opposed to war. Japan cannot really defeat China."

It was an appeal for courage. The Chinese must free themselves of their fear of Japan, must take a firm stand against her imperialism. Yes, there was need for strengthened courage. Part of the trouble did indeed lie in China's fear of Japan. For it had become a legend that Japan could fight and China could not. China was the sleeping giant, Japan the pigmy warrior ready to plunge his spear into the great, helpless breast. Many intelligent Chinese now longed to stir the people to self-reliance, to convince every Chinese he could fight as well as the men of Japan.

But even as they thought it, a terrible sadness came over these fine Chinese people who proclaimed the need for military defense. That matters should have come to this! For in their hearts they believed that war is bestial, unworthy of a country's best men. Yet China must soon fight for her very life, fight with all the hatred and cunning of guerilla warfare, with the merciless devastation of cannon, with the bitter tenacity and doggedness of an unwieldy people driven to desperation. Yes, China must fight, however much she hated it. And first of all she must overcome her fear of Japan.

Sadly Ching-ling said to herself, "It will come. Our country will discover that when the beast within her is awakened and tortured, she can fight as well as anyone. She will discover that while love unifies, so, too, does hate. Ah, a bitter, bitter thing."

It was a strange, tense winter, full of uncertainties and premonitions. Mei-ling and the General worked feverishly

for the goal which the General still felt so urgent—national unity. Ai-ling and her husband, planning to attend the coronation of King George, decided to remain in China despite the fact that Dr. Kung had been appointed chief Chinese delegate to that momentous English ceremony. For Japan threatened. No one knew what might happen.

The spring of 1937 passed into summer. Then on a night in July, near Marco Polo Bridge west of Peiping, shots were fired between Japanese troops on maneuvers and Chinese troops stationed there. There was a half-hearted attempt at settlement, but everywhere the affair seemed the final spark. Incident after incident followed, provocation after provocation. Soon Japan was openly invading China.

And at last China was preparing to defend her country against the invader. Mei-ling's work of interpreting East to West was suddenly intensified a thousand times. "The rest of the world must know what is happening. They must understand!" she cried, her eyes flashing. Every day she sent a cablegram to the "New York Herald Tribune." She wrote long articles. She spoke over the radio. The world must know!

Ching-ling, tensely reading the message which told her of the firing at Marco Polo Bridge, cried aloud, "It has come! China must have an actively united front. But oh, it may be too late!"

Suddenly Ching-ling was crying. As a child she had not cried as other children do. As a girl she had said that something closed in her, so that she could not weep. But now she wept for China, her country. She sat alone, small and desolate, an aging woman, lost to everything save

the overwhelming fact that war with Japan had come. She did not know that tears were rolling down her cheeks. Time passed. Still she sat there. A door opened and a servant laid letters on her desk and set a cup of fresh tea beside them. The door closed quietly, then opened again. A caller? Yes, she would see him.

The caller stepped in, ushered by the servant. "But, Madame!" He bowed and stepped back. "Perhaps another time?" For Madame Sun was crying! He had known her many years, but he had never seen her like this.

"I have been crying," she said, with the same surprise with which a child will say wonderingly, "My hand is bleeding."

"It does not matter," she continued. "Please be seated. It is news of Japan. You have heard? You have come on that account?"

"Yes," the man replied simply, dropping his eyes from Madame Sun's face.

He had seen her the day that Dr. Sun died. He had seen her following the casket to its tomb on Purple Mountain. He had seen her in the white heat of a protest to the government at Nanking. But he had never seen her like this. He was a gray-haired man who had given himself to China in every way that he could. But he did not love his country with the passion of this woman, he knew. So he sat quiet, humbled before her, his head bowed, waiting for Ching-ling to speak.

At last he felt her eyes upon him and he looked up to meet the deep burning he had known would be in them. "We may fail," she said distinctly. "Japan may succeed. But now we must forget everything in the one determination

to present a united front. If nothing else can unite us, perhaps disaster can." The tears were gone and in their place was her old look of determination and of strength.

Japan had chosen her time well. The nations of Europe were busy with their own problems. No one was in a position to take a stand with China. In the north, Japan soon poured in troops who moved southward, making the Yellow River their objective. By the time the first month of war had passed, an incident involving the death of a Japanese naval officer and a sailor brought the war to Shanghai. The Japanese navy was waiting, ready to start a major battle.

Horrible, bloody warfare settled in around Shanghai. General Chiang was directing. Mei-ling in plain, dark clothes went about among the trenches, doing all she could to put heart into the soldiers. She came, and was gone before the enemy knew of it. Many a young boy, with a new sense of patriotism strange to China, looked at her with burning eyes and said, "We are not afraid of the dwarfs! We shall win. We are not afraid to die!"

Others, dying on the fields or in the hasty, inadequate hospitals, whispered hoarsely as she passed, "We are dying for China. We are glad!"

Something was being born—a new unity, a new understanding of love of country. And it was being born of a common hatred for the Japanese.

The horror of the siege of Shanghai lasted for a month. The Chinese threw themselves with abandon into the defense. At last China's military advisers urged the withdrawal of Chinese troops to a stronger line out of range of the Japanese guns. Both Japan and China were getting ready for a long war. China had men if she had little

else, endless ranks of men who were learning to hate and to fight. The war could go on forever, so far as China was concerned. When Japan took a section, would she have it or not? It would slip from her grasp, the Chinese patriots declared, like grains of loose sand.



General Chiang was made dictator with full control over every aspect of Chinese life. It was war, war to the bitter end, and no voice was raised in protest against his command. Even Ai-ling, ever heedful of the prominence

of her family, failed to mention that by this act China had placed Chiang and Mei-ling in its highest position. Everyone was absorbed in the terrific realization that war with Japan had come. There was no time for personal appraisal.

Now Japan began to bombard inland cities, terrorizing the Chinese people. China protested, the world protested, but the bombings went on. Nanking, the national capital, was threatened. Speaking on a world broadcast, Mei-ling described the condition of the war refugees, the tens of thousands of lost, homeless children wandering the streets, the old and feeble starting for the open country, not knowing where they were going.

While the invasion went on and the national troops dug themselves in to defend Nanking, the next objective of the Japanese, General Chiang decided upon a new move within China. "The time has come," he said to Mei-ling, "to take a public stand which will show our country, and the world, that we are indeed a united front."

"You mean—?" began Mei-ling questioningly.

"Yes," said the General. "I am thinking of those against whom we have carried on our civil campaign, those who mistakenly believe in their own kind of government for our land—the Communists. They will fight beside us. All Chinese must now stand together, regardless of belief. When we have defended our country from Japan, the matter of working out our own democracy can be taken up."

"It is a matter of conviction," said Mei-ling. "But how shall you incorporate them?"

"They will become the Eighth Route Army, and remain under their own leader, Chu Teh. Whatever his gov-

ernmental beliefs, he is nevertheless one of the great military leaders of our nation. We shall work together!"

"Yes," said Mei-ling. And again her thoughts went swiftly winging their way to her beloved Ching-ling.

Quickly the word spread everywhere. There was to be a truly united front, at last, against Japan. To the com-



mon people, it seemed simply a reasonable step. China needed all the soldiers she could get, and Chu Teh's men were famous fighters. But to the military leaders of China's national army, the decision was momentous. Here was real help! Those men of Chu Teh's knew the north-western country where the Japanese had made their greatest gains. And they were fearless. What did it mat-

ter in the emergency what they believed about governmental ways and means? The future of China was at stake. Together, at last. Together, to face the enemy. A strange, new feeling began to move through China.

Ching-ling, living since the fall of Shanghai in the home of T. L. in Hongkong, listened quietly to the radio broadcast which brought word of the General's new step. With no word to T. V., beside her, until the message was complete, she at length spoke with one of those flashes of humor which only Dr. Sun had ever before seen, "So! In a pinch the outlaws are called in!" Then the humor vanished and she added, with the pallor which now so easily crept over her cheeks, "Oh, if only we are not too late!"

She looked small, frail, there beside T. V., tall, strong, her oldest brother. Ching-ling looked up at him. Her brother was important to the nation, while she, Ching-ling, was the discord in the family. But the blood of Mother and Father Soong ran through them both.

Impulsively, she held out her hand and said in the husky, sweet voice which might have belonged to a girl, "T. V., we are closer than ever before, closer than we may ever be again. Those in whom you believe and those in whom I put my trust are today side by side to defend our country. I am more at peace than I have ever been since the day Tsung-li died."

Others came into the room, and the moment passed. But it would never be forgotten by either of them. And to Ching-ling it meant even more than T. V. could guess. T. V., her brother, forgave and understood. In the silence of that night she whispered into the emptiness, "Oh, Tsung-li, I did not know that it mattered any more. I did

not know that I could be so weak. But it is heavenly to have this one of my own understand."

In central China the Japanese forces pushed up the valley of the Yangtze River toward Nanking. Catastrophe hung over all the great river valley and the government departments left Nanking, scattering themselves in Hankow, Chungking and Yunnan. The defense of Nanking was carefully planned, but the terrific fighting around Shanghai had so depleted the Chinese ranks that there were not enough men to carry out the scheme. The defense was ordered to fall back. They were pushed into the river, the high walls of Nanking, built for defense in the Middle Ages, proving as nothing before modern military machines. Nanking fell to the Japanese on December 12, 1937.

The few Soongs in Hongkong gathered in mutual agony—Ai-ling, T. V., Ching-ling. Far in the interior, where she had gone on a special mission, Mei-ling listened, white and sick, to the reports coming by private radio. She was seeing Nanking as it had been, a great city with broad streets and new government buildings, with colleges and universities. It was the national capital, center of all China's hopes. Her fall could not, could not be true!

But it was true. From the tragedy of the news, throughout China a new determination quickly became evident. And the world, watching, felt that in those dark days a new nation had indeed been born.

The General was now in the field, directing his own troops. A renewed spirit quickened them, with their General there, leading them, narrowly escaping death. They had need of that renewal. Japan had sworn to reach the

Yellow River before snowfall, to cut the intersection of China's east and west, and north and south railways. No one knew what lay ahead. The war had only begun.

Mei-ling, realizing that she now could do nothing near the front, returned to Hongkong. With great relief she there learned that T. V. would take over the position of Secretary-General of the Air Commission. "In these times, it needs you," she said. "I have done all I could." There was far too much for each of them to do.

And now at Hongkong, they were together for a little while, the Soong Six—the sisters, T. V., T. L., and T. A. All together, and closer than they had been since the day they set sail for America. There in the gracious room, it was as though the war were a terrible dream, as though they were children again, and at any moment Mother or Father Soong would come walking in: Mother Soong, erect, serious, handsome, coming to sit among them, inquiring of the doings of the day the while her small, beautiful hands lay easily crossed in her lap, Father Soong, rushing in, throwing off his crumpled Western hat, dropping into the nearest chair to lean forward, arms on knees, measuring the stubby fingers of one hand against those of the other, and asking brusquely, "Everything all right? Well, the printing business is coming on. More demand than I thought!"

The thought of Mother and Father Soong was vividly with the six of them, sitting together there, on that one rare night in Hongkong during the winter of 1938.

Suddenly Mei-ling spoke, "We are all here, the Soong Six, all in action for China, as Father would say. Oh, don't you remember how he used to tell us, in his sing-song way, 'When the Soong Six get into action,

Old Confucius will turn in his grave'? And here we are grown, almost old! And it has come about, the dream of our mother and father."

There was a silence for a little while, then through the semi-darkness Ching-ling's voice came quietly to them, distinct and strong, "If anyone has failed to carry out that dream, it has been I." She drew her breath quickly in, then continued, "I have opposed you all, because of my conviction which would not let me do otherwise. But that fact has in no way affected my love for you. Nor shall it, ever. I have only done what I had to do. And now China has a united front. All else must wait."

No one in the little family circle moved until at last Ai-ling rose and went over to a seat on a low stool beside Ching-ling. "We have all done the same," she said gently, reaching for Ching-ling's hand. "Just what we had to do. Each of us needed to do different things, but at heart we have always belonged to each other, for each of us is a part of the Soong family."

Again there was silence, then Ching-ling cried, "But I have not changed my beliefs! When the war is over, I must continue to work for that which holds my allegiance. We cannot stand together then!" And she sat looking at the others, alien even while they tried to draw her in.

With an impulsive up-flinging of her hands, Mei-ling now spoke, a sob rising in her throat, "It is just as I have always said. Ching-ling, our sister, can enjoy nothing but her cause." Openly wiping her eyes, Mei-ling continued through her handkerchief, "But even though we cannot believe as you do, sister of ours, we yet respect your honesty and we shall always love you."

Suddenly she was smiling, the lamplight shining on her glistening eyes. "Oh, Ching-ling, remember how I used to want to be the belle of Shanghai? As if that mattered!" Her low laughter rang out, breaking the tension of the room.

"What should I ever do without you!" Ching-ling exclaimed, leaning toward her sister. Her face grew soft. "You do not agree with me, Mei-ling, but you always understand."

"Perhaps I get that from Father," Mei-ling said thoughtfully, "if I have it at all. Dear Father, who was so determined to change China!"

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